

COWPER

THE TASK

SELECT

MINOR POEMS

—
GRIFFITH

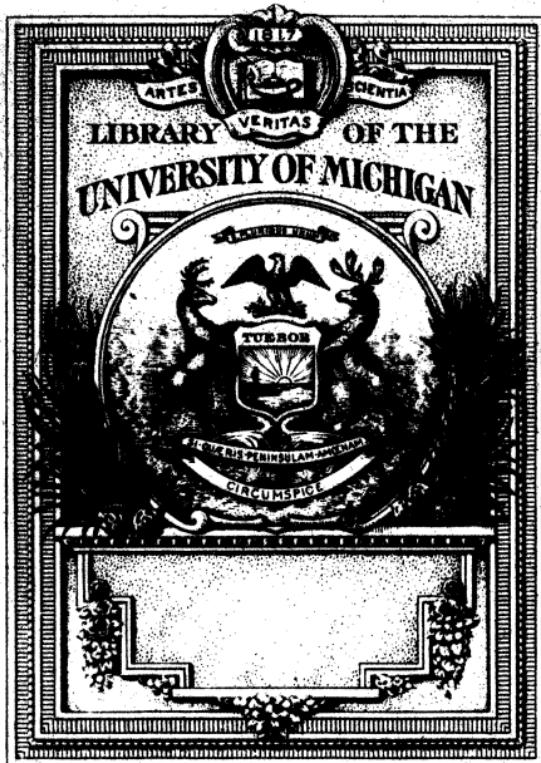


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COWPER

THE TASK

WITH TIROCINIUM, AND SELECTIONS FROM THE
MINOR POEMS, A.D. 1784—1799

EDITED

WITH LIFE AND NOTES

BY

HENRY THOMAS GRIFFITH, B.A.

Vicar of Felmingham, Norfolk

Formerly Scholar of Pembroke College, Oxford

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LIFE OF WILLIAM COWPER.

A.D. 1731—1800.

WILLIAM COWPER was born on the 15th of November (O. S.; Nov. 26, N. S.) 1731, at Great Berkhamstead, in Hertfordshire. His father, the Rev. John Cowper, D.D., the Rector of that parish, and a Chaplain to King George II, was the second son of Spencer Cowper, a Judge of the Common Pleas, whose elder brother William became Lord Chancellor in 1707, and was created Earl Cowper in 1718. Dr. Cowper took to wife Anne, daughter of Roger Donne, Esq., of Ludham Hall in Norfolk; of the same family as Dr. John Donne, the famous poet and Dean of St. Paul's.

William was one of six children, of whom only himself and his youngest brother John grew up to manhood. The birth of the latter cost the life of his mother; who died Nov. 13, 1737, at the age of thirty-four. After the lapse of forty-seven years, Cowper wrote to his friend Hill: 'I can truly say, that not a week passes (perhaps I might with equal veracity say a day) in which I do not think of her. Such was the impression her tenderness made upon me, though the opportunity she had for showing it was so short.' The Poet pleased himself with thinking that he bore a nearer resemblance, both in mind and body, to his mother's family, than to that of his father. On the receipt of that Picture of his Mother, which drew from him some of the most touching lines to be found in any language, he wrote thus to his cousin

Mrs. Bodham, in 1790: 'There is in me, I believe, more of the Donne than of the Cowper ; and though I love all of both names, and have a thousand reasons to love those of my own name, yet I feel the bond of nature draw me vehemently to your side. I was thought in the days of my childhood much to resemble my mother ; and in my natural temper, of which at the age of fifty-eight I must be supposed to be a competent judge, can trace both her and my late uncle, your father. Somewhat of his irritability ; and a little, I would hope, of his and of her —, I know not what to call it, without seeming to praise myself, which is not my intention ; but speaking to *you*, I will even speak out, and say good nature.'

There can be little doubt, that Cowper inherited from his mother much of that sensibility of nerve and delicacy of sentiment, which proved the source of so great unhappiness to him in the next scene on which he entered.

At the age of six years he was 'taken from the nursery' and sent to a large boarding-school, kept by Dr. Pitman, at Market Street, a town on the border-line of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. At this school, during two years, he found 'hardships of various kinds to conflict with' ; nor can this statement surprise any one, who considers the sensitive nature and the retiring habits of the child. 'I was,' he tells us, 'singled out from all the other boys, by a lad of about fifteen years of age, as a proper object upon whom he might let loose the cruelty of his temper. His savage treatment of me impressed such a dread of his figure upon my mind, that I well remember being afraid to lift my eyes upon him higher than his knees ; and that I knew him better by his shoe-buckles than by any other part of his dress.'

In 1739 the child was removed from Dr. Pitman's school on account of an inflammation in the eyes, accompanied with 'specks on both, which threatened to cover them.' He was in consequence placed for two years in the house of Mrs. Disney, a female oculist. From her treatment he gained only slight relief ; but 'at the age of fourteen the small-pox seized him, and proved the better oculist of the two, as it

removed the specks entirely.' He was, however, troubled with a weakness in the eyes more or less throughout life; and the affection was perhaps congenital, for he wrote to Hill in Nov. 1782, 'My eyes are, in general, better than I remember them to have been since I first opened them upon this sublunary stage, which is now a little more than half a century ago.'

In 1741, being a boy of ten years, Cowper was entered at Westminster School, then under the rule of Dr. Nichols. Here he spent seven of the happiest years of his life. In spite of his natural diffidence, and gentleness of manners, he became popular alike with his Masters and his school-fellows. With the former he earned a reputation for scholarship; and amongst the latter he 'acquired fame by his achievements' in cricket and football, and those other sports by which boys are apt to gauge the courage and spirit of their companions. Nearly forty years after he left school, he wrote to Unwin (1786), 'I was a schoolboy in high favour with my master, received a silver groat for my exercise, and had the pleasure of seeing it sent from form to form for the admiration of all who were able to understand it.' No wonder that we find him saying, in the same letter, 'He who cannot look forward with comfort, must find what comfort he can in looking backward. Upon this principle I the other day sent my imagination upon a trip thirty years behind me. She was very obedient, and at last set me down in the sixth form at Westminster. I fancied myself once more a schoolboy,—a period of life in which, if I had never tasted real happiness, I was at least equally unacquainted with its contrary.' And no wonder that even in his '*Tirocinium*' he should dwell on

'The fond attachment to the well-known place
Where first we started into life's long race.'

It is clear therefore that the strong opinion which Cowper afterwards formed against the public-school system, and to which he gave so energetic an expression in the poem cited, was not the result of unhappiness in his personal experience

of school life. Still less are we justified in tracing, as some have traced, the malady which was ere long to overcloud his intellects, to any misery endured in his boyhood, either at Westminster, or at Market Street.

Our embryo Poet was not the only one amongst his contemporaries at Westminster who was destined to play a conspicuous part in the drama of life. He was there amidst a galaxy of genius and wit, whose 'bright particular stars' were in due course to shed their lustre over the world of literature or politics; though the light cast by some of them was lurid, and their influence baleful. Not to speak of Vincent Bourne, who was Cowper's form-master, and whose graceful Latin poems his pupil rendered into not less graceful English; there were Robert Lloyd, Charles Churchill, Richard Cumberland, George Colman 'the elder,' Bonnell Thornton, Elijah Impey, and Warren Hastings. Yet of these men, all of whom evinced powers that have rendered their names more or less well known at this day, he who will live the longest in the grateful affections of his fellow-countrymen is William Cowper.

When the schoolboy reached his eighteenth year, it became necessary that his father should decide on a profession for him. Family traditions and family influence pointed naturally to the Law. Accordingly, while Cowper was yet at Westminster, his name was entered at the Middle Temple, April 29, 1748. He left school soon afterwards, and resided with his father at Berkhamstead for nine months; after which he was articled for three years to Mr. Chapman, an attorney in Ely Place, Holborn, that he might be acquiring a knowledge of legal processes whilst keeping his terms. Here he made little or no progress in the study of the Law, notwithstanding the advantages placed within his reach by constant association with his fellow-clerk in the office, Edward, afterwards Lord Thurlow. The fact was, that Cowper paid too little attention to his profession, for which indeed he had no natural taste, and too much to his fair cousins in Southampton Row. These were the daughters of Mr. Ashley Cowper, his father's

younger brother, and afterwards Clerk of the Parliament ; at whose house the young law-student passed all his Sundays, and was soon found spending also 'his leisure hours, which were wellnigh all his time.' Harriet, the eldest of the three cousins, afterwards Lady Hesketh, was the friend and correspondent of Cowper throughout his later years ; and to her next sister, Theodora Jane, he became bound by still tenderer ties. In a word, an attachment sprang up between them ; and the double attractions of love and family affection made the house the constant resort of the young poet. For a poet he was by this time ; although the love-ditties addressed to his 'Delia' (of which the first that remains is dated 1752) afford but slight presage of the powers afterwards developed in him. He frequently took Thurlow with him to his uncle's house ; and the story of those days may be best summed up in his own words to Lady Hesketh, 'I did actually live three years with Mr. Chapman, that is to say, I slept three years at his house ; but I lived, that is to say, I spent my days, in Southampton Row, as you very well remember. There was I, and the future Lord Chancellor, constantly employed, from morning to night, in giggling and making giggle, instead of studying the Law. O fie, cousin ! how could you do so ?' It was, however, not at this house, but on meeting Thurlow in Bloomsbury Square, in the year 1762, that Cowper said to him, 'Thurlow, I am nobody, and shall always be nobody ; and you will be Lord Chancellor. You shall provide for me when you are.' 'I surely will,' replied Thurlow, with a smile. 'These ladies,' pursued Cowper, 'are witnesses.' 'Let them be so,' was Thurlow's answer, 'for I will certainly do it.' This prediction was fulfilled in 1778 ; the promise, never.

In 1752, having attained his majority, Cowper quitted Mr. Chapman's office, and hired chambers in the Middle Temple ; and on the 14th of June, 1754, he was called to the Bar. It seems to have been about this time that he first came under the power of that tendency to depression of spirits, to which other members of his family had been subject, but which assumed in his case so fearful a form. In an Epistle to Lloyd,

written in 1754, we find him speaking of 'a fierce banditti' of 'gloomy thoughts,'—

'That with a black infernal train,
Make cruel inroads in my brain,
And daily threaten to drive thence
My little garrison of sense.'

'I was struck,' he writes, 'not long after my settlement in the Temple, with such a dejection of spirits, as none but they who have felt the same can have the least conception of. Day and night I was upon the rack, lying down in horror, and rising up in despair.'

The origin of this distressing malady has been sought in the grief felt by a child of six years, for the death of his mother; and again, in the ill usage which he suffered at his first school. But we have seen that this did not prevent his being thoroughly happy during his seven years at Westminster.

Some of his biographers detect in the schoolboy premonitory symptoms of the malady in the man, in the fact (related by himself) that at one time, 'surveying his activity and strength, and noticing the evenness of his pulse, he began to entertain a notion that perhaps he might never die;' while 'soon after, he had frequent intimations of a consumptive habit, which perfectly convinced him that he was mortal.' All boys of a highly imaginative mind, such as Cowper's was from his earliest years, and who, like him, are driven through a diffident and retiring nature, into habits of communing with self, are apt to entertain fancies of this sort. The Poet himself assures us that a tendency to lowness of spirits was observable in his family; and there can be little doubt that in himself it was constitutional. His nature was one that ever craved sympathy and affection; and it is probable that the sense of isolation which falls as a dead weight upon a youth of this disposition, on 'becoming in a manner completely master of himself,' and beginning life on his own account in lonely chambers, fostered a melancholy which was already his by inheritance. Had he taken any real interest in his profession,

and applied himself conscientiously to the mastery of its details, this morbid development might perhaps have been averted, or at least postponed. Cowper's intellect was indeed too vigorous to admit of utter inaction; but it was at this time exercised not on the mysteries of Law, but on classical literature; of which he wrote to Mr. Newton, in 1781, 'I valued a man according to his proficiency and taste in it; and had the meanest opinion of all other accomplishments unaccompanied by that.'

It has been imagined that the frustration of Cowper's hopes of marrying his cousin Theodora, was the occasion of this seizure. The truth seems to be, that this was the result rather than the cause of his illness. Mr. Ashley Cowper, on observing the growing attachment between the cousins, had offered his objections; first, on the score of his nephew's lack of means; and next, on account of the consanguinity between the two. His own experience had convinced him of the family taint; and he had probably viewed with alarm indications of its existence in Cowper, which might have eluded an observation less sharpened by such previous knowledge, and by parental solicitude for his daughter's future happiness. He firmly refused his assent to the union; and on removing from Southampton Row to Palace Yard, he closed his doors to his nephew. This decision was accepted on both sides as final. The last of Cowper's addresses to 'Delia' is dated in 1755; and his poem on 'Disappointment,' in which he takes his farewell of her, probably belongs to that year, or to 1756. They never met afterwards; nor is there any evidence to shew that Cowper's nature had been so deeply moved by his passion, as to be injuriously affected by this sudden termination of his courtship. It may however be remarked, that he stands almost alone amongst poets, in making no allusion to the passion of love. Some years after this separation, he wrote to Lady Hesketh: 'I still look back to the memory of your sister, and regret her: but, how strange it is, if we were to meet now, we should not know each other!' When he became dependent on his family, an anonymous friend,

described as ‘a person who loved him tenderly,’ wrote to say that ‘whatever reduction of his income might happen, should be supplied to him.’ Yet his heart does not seem to have suggested to him the writer’s name. From time to time presents reached him from the same anonymous hand; sometimes in money, sometimes in the form of elegant toys such as bachelors love. Now it was a desk; and now a snuff-box, bearing on its lid a representation of ‘The Peasant’s Nest,’ with three leverets sporting in front of it. Strange, that it should not have occurred to the mind of a Poet, that the anonymous donor might possibly have been found to be—not a man, but a woman! Far otherwise was it with Theodora. She had laid up her cousin in the recesses of her heart, and could find no room there for another.

‘Fixed in her choice, and faithful—but in vain,’

she died unmarried in 1825; and not till then were those early effusions of Cowper’s love to her, which she had hoarded amongst her treasures, given to the world.

‘From his first attack of melancholy in the Temple, Cowper was restored by a visit to Southampton. He walked out one day with some friends to Freemantle, a place about a mile distant; the morning being calm and clear, and the sun pouring his golden sheen over the sea and the glades of the New Forest. ‘Here it was,’ he relates, ‘that on a sudden, as if another sun had been kindled that instant in the heavens, on purpose to dispel sorrow and vexation of spirit, I felt the weight of all my misery taken off; my heart became light and joyful in a moment; I could have wept with transport had I been alone.’ So keenly did his poetical sensibilities respond to the magic touch of Nature.

The year 1756 was marked by the death of Dr. John Cowper, which took place on the 3rd of August. He had married a second wife, and there had never been much intercourse between him and his son. On this occasion the Poet paid his last visit to his native place. He then ‘sighed a long adieu to fields and woods; and was at no time so sen-

sible of their beauties, as just when he left them all behind him, to return no more.' For, little as he had been at home, 'there was neither tree, nor gate, nor stile in all the country, to which he did not feel a relation; and the house he preferred to a palace.'

In 1759 Cowper removed from the Middle to the Inner Temple. On his return to London after his sojourn at Southampton, being under the persuasion that he was indebted for his recovery mainly to change of scene, he had betaken himself to 'a continued circle of diversions.' These were principally of a literary character. Cowper had inherited the poetical talent. His father, his uncle Ashley, his aunt Mrs. Madan, and his brother John, were all writers of verses. So was his ancestor Sir William Cowper, the first Baronet of the family; whose verses composed for the monument erected by himself to 'his spiritual father,' the Judicious Hooker, in 1634, are printed by Izaak Walton in his Life of that Divine. Cowper tells us that he was himself 'a dabbler in rhymes' at the age of fourteen, when he wrote a translation of an elegy of Tibullus, which has not come down to us. The earliest of his poems that we possess was composed in his seventeenth year; being 'Verses written at Bath on finding the heel of a shoe in 1748,' in imitation of Phillips' 'Splendid Shilling'; and a version of the 137th Psalm is also assigned to his Westminster days. Whilst at the Temple, Cowper was a member of the 'Nonsense Club.' This was composed of seven Westminster men, who dined together every Thursday, and amused themselves with literary *bagatelles*. Here he renewed his connexion with his old schoolfellows Churchill, Colman, Lloyd, and Bonnell Thornton; and here he formed a life-long friendship with Joseph Hill, that

'honest man, close button'd to the chin,
Broadcloth without, and a warm heart within.'

With Colman and Thornton, Cowper now entered into literary engagements. Whilst yet at Christ Church, they had started a weekly periodical, called 'The Connoisseur'; and to the second volume of this, published in 1756, Cowper contri-

buted a few papers, such as 'The Character of the Delicate Billy Suckling' (No. 111); 'A Letter from Christopher Ironsides, an old Bachelor, complaining of indignities from the Ladies' (No. 115); 'Of Keeping a Secret' (No. 119); 'An Account of the present state of Country Churches, their Clergy, and Congregations' (No. 134); and one on a subject which he afterwards treated poetically, namely 'Conversation' (No. 138). He also sent some articles to the 'St. James' Chronicle,' a newspaper conducted in part by the same two friends. He translated four out of eight books of Voltaire's *Henriade*, for his brother John; and the joint production appeared in a magazine in 1759. He assisted the Duncombes in their translations of Horace; and (as he informed Mr. Newton in 1781) 'while at the Temple, he produced several halfpenny ballads, two or three of which had the honour to be popular.'

From this kind of occupation, however, Cowper derived more pleasure than profit. He had come into a very small sum of money at his father's death; and that little was daily becoming less. He held no briefs; and up to this time his family interest had only availed to procure for him (in 1759) a Commissionership of Bankrupts, with a salary of £60 a year. He noticed the diminution of his little patrimony with a certain vague uneasiness of mind. For some time he affected to make light of the matter, declaring to his fellow-Templar, Rowley, that 'if he never sank below that degree of poverty, in which a man enjoys clean linen and good company, he cared not if he never rose above it.' But Cowper's mind was not one that could succeed in muffling its real anxieties beneath the cloak of assumed gaiety. He was becoming more and more alarmed at the prospect before him, when an event occurred which seemed to open a way of escape out of his difficulties.

In 1763 the Clerk of the Journals of the House of Lords died; and about the same time the posts of Reading Clerk, and Clerk of Committees, became vacant. All three were patent offices, in the patronage of Major Cowper; who

immediately offered the two last, which were the most lucrative, to his cousin. Cowper accepted the offer: but no sooner had he done so, than his inveterate diffidence induced a dread of an official position, to which the publicity from which he shrank was of necessity attached. Yet he had always looked forward to the reversion of these offices; and had even remarked lightly, that he should be glad when the holder of them was dead, that he might step into the vacant place. And now these words returned to his horrified conscience, as having been uttered 'in the spirit of a murderer.' After much mental conflict, he begged Major Cowper to let him exchange these more profitable posts for the Clerkship of the Journals, the duties of which were performed in private. But a fresh difficulty arose, which Cowper was powerless to surmount. Objections were raised to the Major's right of presentation; and an order was issued that his nominee should be examined at the bar of the House, as to his qualifications for the office. This dreadful anticipation was too much for the nerves of the sensitive man, already overwrought by his previous agitation. 'A thunderbolt,' he says, 'would have been as welcome to me as this announcement.' Though time was allowed him for preparation, he toiled in vain to make himself master of his new duties, by the study of the Journals. 'The feelings,' he adds, 'of a man when he arrives at the place of execution are probably much like mine every time I set my foot in the office, which was every day for more than half a year together.' Moreover he 'was not in a condition to receive instruction, much less to elicit it out of manuscripts without direction.' Yet if he should throw up the appointment, he would not merely be 'casting away the only chance he had of being well provided for,' but would be virtually ceding his cousin's right of nomination. He fled to Margate during the vacation, and for a time was restored to cheerfulness. But as the hour drew near when he must undergo the dreaded ordeal, his terrors returned with redoubled force. 'They,' he says, 'whose spirits are formed like mine,—to whom a public exhibition of themselves

on any occasion is mortal poison, may have some idea of the horror of my situation: others can have none.' It was to no purpose that he consulted the 'virtuous and faithful Heberden':—'quiet forsook him by day, and peace by night.' He longed for madness, as his only chance of escape. It came; and in his madness he strove to kill himself. In each successive attempt he found himself unexpectedly foiled: until at last he was startled into a conviction of the guilt of the act, which he had so often ineffectually set himself to perpetrate. But this sense of guilt proves more maddening than all besides. He is convinced that he is a reprobate, that he has committed the unpardonable sin. At length his friends were compelled to take the only course that seemed open to them; and they removed him to a private asylum at St. Alban's, kept by Dr. Nathaniel Cotton.

Cowper entered Dr. Cotton's house on the 7th of December, 1763. For the first five months his intellects seemed to be utterly destroyed. Gradually, however, the soothing influence of daily converse with a man of cultivated mind, refined feelings, literary tastes, and strong Christian principles, produced a change for the better. In July, 1764, Cowper received a visit from his brother John. When the latter heard the sufferer repeat his 'settled assurance of sudden judgment,' he quietly told him that it was all a 'delusion.' The words were caught up with eagerness. 'I burst into tears,' writes Cowper, 'and cried out "If it be a delusion, then am I the happiest of beings." Something like a ray of hope was shot into my heart.' He opened his Bible, long since flung aside as a book in which a doomed man like him had no interest. The first verse that met his eye was Romans iii. 25: 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.' 'Immediately,' proceeds Cowper, 'I received strength to believe, and the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness fell upon me.' And now all was joy and peace. The excellent and judicious Dr. Cotton did what he could to moderate the

ecstasies of the young convert ; tending him not simply with the skill of a practised psychologist, but with the sympathy of a brother in Christ. Well might Cowper write to Lady Hesketh, 'I reckon it one instance of the Providence that has attended me . . that I was carried to Dr. Cotton. I was not only treated by him with the greatest tenderness while I was ill, and attended with the utmost diligence ; but when my reason was restored to me, and I had so much need of a religious friend to converse with, to whom I could open my mind upon the subject without reserve, I could hardly have found a fitter person for the purpose.' And well did the Physician deserve that the Poet should make for him a niche in the temple of Fame, by the grateful allusion to the former in the poem on Hope, as

‘Cotton, whose humanity sheds rays,
That make superior skill his second praise.’

In days gone by it was no uncommon thing to hear it said that it was religion which drove poor Cowper mad. It is much nearer the truth to say that it was religion which restored him from madness. Long before his morbid tendencies led him to this deplorable point, there was that in religion which touched a chord in his susceptible nature, whose music soothed him in agitation of mind. When at school at Market Street, he tells us, 'one day as he sat melancholy and almost ready to weep,' expecting his tormentor every moment, the words of the Psalmist came into his mind, 'I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.' 'I then applied them,' he adds, 'to my own case, and instantly perceived in myself a briskness of spirit and a cheerfulness I had never before experienced.' Again, on his first attack in the Temple, he met with the poems of George Herbert : and 'though he found not there a cure for his malady, yet it never seemed so much alleviated as while he was reading him.' And about the same time he composed a set of prayers, and found great comfort in the frequent use of them.

Though fully restored to health Cowper remained as an

inmate of Dr. Cotton's house till the end of eighteen months ; and on the 22nd of June, 1765, he proceeded to Huntingdon. This place had been selected for him, as being within easy reach of Cambridge, where his brother was residing on his Fellowship at Bene't College. A few weeks after his arrival, a young man fresh from Cambridge sought out the recluse in his lonely lodgings. This was William Cawthorne Unwin, ' a most unreserved and amiable young man, known almost as soon as seen,' and ' sincere in his belief and love of the Gospel.' He introduced Cowper to his family, which the latter found to be ' altogether the cheerfulness and most engaging family it is possible to conceive.' There was the father, Morley Unwin, the non-resident Rector of Grimston in Norfolk, ' a man of learning and good sense, and as simple as Parson Adams.' There was the sister, a young lady of eighteen, ' rather handsome and genteel,' who became the wife of the Rev. Matthew Powley, afterwards Vicar of Dewsbury in Yorkshire. And there was the mother, Mary Unwin, whose name will never die whilst Cowper's lives : she, who was destined to be to him ' often a nurse, and invariably the kindest friend through a thousand adversities, that he had to grapple with in the course of thirty years.' She ' had a very uncommon understanding, had read much to excellent purpose, and was more polite than a Duchess ;' and better than all, Cowper found that they ' had one faith, and had been baptized with the same baptism.' At Huntingdon Cowper not only enjoyed familiar intercourse with these delightful people, but had the further advantage of regular bathing in the Ouse, and of frequent horse exercise ; as visits were exchanged weekly between the brothers at Huntingdon and Cambridge, a distance of fifteen miles. All this did so much for the re-establishment of Cowper's health and spirits, that he wrote to the Major, Oct. 18, 1765, ' It is impossible I could have fixed upon a place so agreeable to me in all respects. I am much happier than the day is long, and sunshine and candlelight see me perfectly contented. I enjoy better health than for many years past.'

In less than a month later, this happiness was increased by Cowper's becoming a permanent resident in the house of the Unwins. He took the place just vacated by one of Mr. Unwin's pupils, and was received as a lodger and boarder with the family, Nov. 11, 1765. With these dear friends he led a life of much regularity, in which however he was conscious of no monotony, in the enjoyment of those domestic pleasures which his nature specially fitted him to appreciate, but from which circumstances had hitherto combined to exclude him. Such a home was what he had for many years ardently desired; for he was of

‘An unambitious mind, that early felt
A wish for ease and leisure;’

and though that blessing was long denied to him, yet at length, at the age of thirty-four, he

‘Found here that leisure and that ease he wish’d.’

A regular attendance at the daily prayers in the parish church, and much devotional reading and conversation during each day at home, were prevented from causing fatigue to the mind by a not less regular practice of taking exercise twice a day; the evening walk being seldom under four miles. Thus too the return of anxiety arising from pecuniary embarrassments was fended off. Such anxiety was impending; for not only was Cowper ‘deeply in debt’ to Dr. Cotton, but his resources were reduced by the resignation of the Commissionership of Bankrupts, in 1765. He had thus become almost wholly dependent upon his relatives, who showed themselves both prompt and delicate in contributing to his support; and he now found that his limited means went farther at Mr. Unwin’s house, than in his own lodgings, where in three months, ‘by the help of good management, and a clear notion of economy, he contrived to spend the income of a twelvemonth.’

After eighteen months of peace and tranquillity, the home at Huntingdon was broken up by the death of Mr. Unwin, in June, 1767. This event rendered it necessary that the widow and her lodger—towards whom ‘her behaviour had always been that of a mother to a son’—should seek for

themselves a new home. Mr. Unwin had expressed his wish that, in case of his death, Mr. Cowper might continue to dwell with his widow. With both it was an essential point, that they should remove to some spot at which they might be under the faithful preaching of the gospel, in the form in which they had received it. While the question was in debate a visitor arrived, who had been requested to call on them by Dr. Conyers, a Cambridge friend of young Unwin, and who is commemorated in the poem on Truth, as one who

‘says much that many may dispute
And cavil at with ease, but none refute.’

This was the Rev. John Newton. It was soon arranged that they should take up their new abode at Olney, in Buckinghamshire ; a parish to which Mr. Newton had been appointed as Curate in 1764.

It was on the 14th of September, 1767, that Cowper left Huntingdon, with Mrs. Unwin, for the vicarage at Olney ; where they passed the first three months. On the 9th of December they removed to Orchard Side, a house situate in the Market-place of Olney : but so near to the vicarage, that by opening a door in each garden wall, and crossing an orchard, the inmates of the one house could make their way to the other without passing through the street.

It may be doubted whether Cowper could have found a place less eligible for a man subject to depression of spirits, than Olney. The country around was flat and marshy, and liable to inundations from the Ouse throughout the winter months ; so much so, that the whole valley between Olney and Emberton was frequently under water. Thus the wooden bridge alluded to at the opening of ‘The Winter Evening’ as ‘bestriding the wintry flood,’ was as ‘needful’ as it was ‘lengthy.’ And the town also was dullness itself, with its

‘One parson, one poet, one bellman, one crier.’

Its inhabitants, all poor and all sickly, were engaged in lace-making and straw-plaiting ; there were no resident gentry save

Mr. Newton and 'Sir Cowper,' as he was deferentially termed by his humble neighbours;

'And the poor Poet was the only Squire.'

Cowper missed the regular exercise he had enjoyed at Huntingdon. He no longer kept a horse; and the condition of the roads was not favourable for walking. In a letter to Mr. Newton (Aug. 5, 1786) he speaks of the 'long confinement in the winter, and indeed for the most part in the autumn too,' as having seriously hurt him; and he adds, 'A gravel walk thirty yards long affords but indifferent scope to the locomotive tendency: yet it is all that we have had to move in for eight months in the year, during thirteen years that I have been a prisoner. Had I been confined in the Tower, the battlements of it would have furnished me with a larger space.' Meanwhile Cowper's intercourse with Mr. Newton was close and affectionate—too close, perhaps, for his health. They 'made it a rule to pass four days in the week together;' dining at one o'clock, taking tea at four, and from six till supper-time engaging in 'service or lecture or something of that kind.' Mr. Newton himself says, that 'for six years they were seldom separate, when at home and awake.' A man of far stronger constitution than Cowper's could hardly fail to become sensible of much mental fatigue, from such intense and exclusive converse with a single mind; even though that mind were Mr. Newton's. Moreover Cowper spent much of his time in visiting the poor, ministering to the sick, and praying at the bedside of the dying; so that (in the words of Mr. Cecil) 'Mr. Newton used to consider him as a sort of curate, from his constant attendance upon the sick and afflicted in that large and necessitous parish.' This occupation, at all times an arduous and discouraging one, even to the pastor who has deliberately devoted himself to the work, must have been peculiarly so to a man of Cowper's highly sensitive organization. But this was not the worst. Mr. Newton held frequent prayer-meetings in his parish; and Cowper was encouraged, if not

required, to lead the devotions on these occasions. Mr. Greatheed tells us in his funeral sermon, 'I have heard him say, that when he expected to take the lead in social worship, his mind was always greatly agitated for some hours preceding, owing to that timidity which he invariably felt at every appearance before his fellow-creatures.' It might be true that 'his trepidation subsided as soon as he began to speak in prayer;' but was it well that nerves so finely strung should be subjected to such a strain?

In the midst of labours tending so much alike to spiritual excitement and physical exhaustion. Cowper lost his only brother, to whose memory he has paid so loving a tribute in 'The Time-Piece' (ll.780-95). This event took place on March 20, 1770; and although Cowper had the satisfaction of knowing that his brother, in his last illness, embraced his own views of saving grace, the shock was one that severely tried his affectionate nature. At length Mr. Newton was struck with the increasing gloom that was enveloping his friend. However injudicious we may think the course which the former had pursued in his character of Cowper's spiritual director, none can question the reality and fulness of his affection. The constitution of Mr. Newton presented a singular contrast to that of the other, both in body and mind. The old sea-captain knew nothing of physical fatigue; the old slaver could little appreciate the squeamish susceptibilities of refined sentiment. 'With limbs of British oak and nerves of wire,' with an unflagging zeal, and a will strong if not coarse, he was ill fitted for the handling of so delicate and complex a piece of mechanism as the mind of a Cowper. By way of diverting the Poet's brooding thoughts, he projected in 1771 the preparation of the Olney Hymns. Cowper had written occasional hymns for him as early as 1767, and now the friends set to work diligently for two years to produce their joint collection. The Hymns were not published till Feb. 15, 1779. They were 348 in number; and of these 67 were distinguished as Cowper's by the initial C. It may be that some lovers of Hymnology are not aware, that amongst

these are to be found their old favourites,—‘God moves in a mysterious way’; ‘Hark! my soul, it is the Lord’; ‘Jesus, where’er Thy people meet’; ‘Oh for a closer walk with God’; ‘Sometimes a light surprises’; ‘There is a fountain filled with blood’; ‘What various hindrances we meet.’

But why this long delay of eight years, before the publication of the Olney Hymns? Alas! the old malady had returned. We have seen that the attack of 1763 had seized Cowper about ten years after his first fit of melancholy in the Temple. Another decade had now elapsed; and in January, 1773, he was ‘suddenly reduced (as he wrote in 1786) from his wonted rate of understanding, to an almost childish imbecility. This state of mind was accompanied with misapprehension of things and persons. He believed that everybody hated him, and Mrs. Unwin most of all; was convinced that all his food was poisoned; together with ten thousand megrims of the same stamp.’ Matters rapidly grew worse with him. All the most distressing of the old symptoms re-appeared in an aggravated form. At first he refused to go near the vicarage; and when at length induced to enter it, he was equally resolved not to quit it. It was not till August that Mr. Newton consulted Dr. Cotton, and then it was too late. At the end of fourteen months passed under Mr. Newton’s roof, and during which the patient was tended with the watchful assiduity of love by Mrs. Unwin, he exhibited the first signs of recovery, by noticing the growth of the trees and flowers in the garden. ‘The first smile for sixteen months’ was seen on his countenance; and he returned to Orchard Side. Here he resumed his residence with Mrs. Unwin, on the old footing: though it should seem that, but for this return of insanity, the tender tie between the two would have been drawn (if possible) yet closer by marriage. The truth of the current report to this effect has been strenuously denied by the earlier biographers of the Poet, with a sort of vehement indignation for which it is not easy to discern any occasion. But the positive statements quoted by Mr. Benham (Globe edition, 1870,

p. xxxix) must be allowed as conclusive. 'Mr. Bull, in his *Memorials of Newton*, declares that again and again he had heard his father say, that they were about to be married when Cowper's malady returned in 1773; and that Bull knew this from Mrs. Unwin herself.' And then he adds the following extract from Newton's hitherto unpublished *Diary*: 'They were congenial spirits, united in the faith and hope of the gospel; and their intimate and growing friendship led them, in the course of four or five years, to an engagement of marriage, which was well known to me, and to most of their and my friends, and was to have taken place in a few months, but was prevented by the terrible malady which seized him about that time.' It is true that Mrs. Unwin was at this time forty-eight years of age, and Cowper only forty-one; yet it would probably have conduced to the comfort of both, if this union could have been effected. But what had now occurred was thought sufficient to render any revival of the question impossible.

As Cowper slowly regained his mental powers, he began to divert himself not only with his favourite pursuit of gardening, but with carpentering and landscape-painting, and more particularly with keeping pet animals. In 1774 his three hares, Puss, Tiney, and Bess, were given to him; and he furnished an account of their treatment to the Gentleman's Magazine for June, 1784. Lady Hesketh has enumerated no fewer than twenty domesticated animals which he had about him at one time. He amused himself also with the continuation of that delightful series of letters to his friends, which had been begun in the week of his arrival at Huntingdon; but which had flagged, and in the case of Lady Hesketh had ceased entirely, soon after his settlement at Olney.

The next change in the Poet's life was occasioned by Mr. Newton's migration to London. He was presented by Mr. John Thornton, in September, 1779, to the united Rectories of St. Mary Woolnoth and St. Mary Woolchurch Haw; and he quitted Olney early in January, 1780. Before he did so, his forethought for his friend's comfort suggested

his introduction to the Rev. William Bull, a congregational minister at Newport Pagnell, five miles from Olney. He was 'a Dissenter, but a liberal one: a man of letters and of genius, and master of a fine imagination.' The two were drawn towards each other by a mutual attraction; dined together once a fortnight; and became fast friends.

And now began a period of literary activity which proved a most wholesome recreation to Cowper. He took delight in throwing off poems on various subjects of public or private interest. 'I have never,' he writes, 'found an amusement among the many I have been obliged to have recourse to, that so well answered the purpose for which I used it. The quieting and composing effect of it was such, and so totally absorbed have I sometimes been in my rhyming occupation, that neither the past nor the present (those themes which to me are so fruitful in regret at other times) had any longer a share in my contemplation.' The clear sight of love was keen to perceive the benefit which the convalescent derived from this occupation; and Mrs. Unwin urged him to the composition of a long poem worthy of his powers. He asked for a subject, and she gave him 'The Progress of Error.' The Poet addressed himself to the work in December, 1780; and in three months produced not only the poem bearing that name, but also 'Truth,' 'Table Talk,' and 'Expostulation.' Mr. Newton's kind offices availed to secure their acceptance by Johnson, a publisher in St. Paul's Churchyard; and the poems were sent to him in April, 1781. Johnson suggested an addition to the volume: whereupon Cowper wrote 'Hope' and 'Charity'; and to these he soon added 'Conversation' and 'Retirement.' A few minor pieces were included, and the volume was published about the 1st of March, 1782. By the author's request Mr. Newton wrote a preface to it; and his name was to have appeared on the title-page as editor. This preface, dated Feb. 18, 1782, was first prefixed to the fifth edition, 1790; as the publisher feared that its distinctively Evangelical tone would injure the sale of the book.

But ere the publication of this volume, a sunbeam had

glanced across the path of Cowper's social life, which for a while lit up his whole existence with a brightness such as had never before illumined it. In the summer of 1781 he formed the acquaintance of Lady Austen,—‘a lively, agreeable woman, who had seen much of the world, and accounted it a great simpleton, as it is; one who laughed and made laugh, and could keep up a conversation without seeming to labour at it.’ She was the widow of Sir Robert Austen, seventh Baronet of Bexley in Kent; to whom she was married when very young, and with whom she had lived entirely in France, till his death in 1772. When Cowper met her, she was on a visit to her sister, the wife of the Rev. J. Jones of Clifton Reynes, one mile from Olney. She took tea there, and was as much captivated by the person and genius of the Poet, as he was fascinated by her gay and sympathetic manner.

Those were the days of picnics and parties of pleasure: and before Lady Austen returned to London in October, she had become ‘Sister Anna,’ and Cowper her ‘Brother William’; and a correspondence on these terms was arranged between them. But in the ensuing February a disagreement arose. Lady Austen appears to have found in Cowper less reciprocity of sentiment than she expected; and the latter wrote thus to Unwin, ‘She expressed a sort of romantic idea of our merits, and built such expectations of felicity upon our friendship, as we were sure that nothing human could possibly answer. I wrote to her to remind her that we were mortal, to recommend it to her not to think more highly of us than the subject would warrant.’ ‘This letter,’ he continues, ‘gave mortal offence. It received indeed an answer, but such a one as I could by no means reply to: and there ended—for it is impossible that it should be renewed—a friendship that bid fair to be lasting.’ The lady however viewed the matter in a different light. In less than a fortnight, Cowper received a present of three pair of ruffles from her; and the least he could do was to send his thanks by Mr. Jones, and transmit a copy of his Poems to Lady Austen. Shortly afterwards she repeated her visit to Clifton; when she threw

herself with tears into Mrs. Unwin's arms, and soon put the whole party at their ease. In a few weeks she took lodgings in the vicarage, with the design of fixing her abode at Olney; and the occupants of the two dwellings became so closely united as to form almost one household. 'A practice obtained at length of dining with each other alternately every day, Sundays excepted ;' and beyond this, Cowper 'paid his devoirs to her ladyship every morning at eleven.' The trio formed a most harmonious and cheerful party, both at home and in their walks into the country. Cowper wrote poems for Lady Austen to sing to her harpsichord: among others, that on the 'Loss of the Royal George' (Sept. 1782). One evening in October, perceiving her friend to be in more than usually low spirits, she sought to enliven him by reciting the story of John Gilpin, as one 'which had been told her in her childhood.' After all had retired to rest, peals of laughter were heard to issue from the Poet's chamber, so continuous and hysterical as to alarm Mrs. Unwin for his reason. The next morning he presented the ladies with 'The Diverting History of John Gilpin,' which he had spent the night in turning into verse.

The ballad was sent to Unwin, who got it printed in the 'Public Advertiser' of Nov. 14, 1782; the author's consent to this being guarded with one proviso,—*auctore tantum anonymo*. The story could not fail to become popular. Writing to Unwin, May 8, 1784 (eighteen months after its first appearance), Cowper tells him that the publisher had at first objected to his design of adding it 'at the tail' of his new volume of poems, on the ground of its being 'now too trite'; inasmuch as it had been 'hacknied in every magazine, in every newspaper, and in every street.' A fresh impulse was given to the popularity of 'John Gilpin,' when (in 1785) Mr. Richard Sharp, known as 'Conversation Sharp,' suggested to John Henderson the Actor, that he should include it in his series of Lenten recitations in Freemason's Hall. From that time the verses became 'familiar in men's mouths as household words.'

It is not only for 'John Gilpin' that the world has to thank Lady Austen. But for her, we should have had no 'Task'; and Cowper would not have been selected for this Series, as the representative poet of his age. The volume of 1782, though containing much that perhaps no man but Cowper could have written, did not possess the elements of popularity, either in its subjects or the manner of their treatment. If we compare the later poems of the series with 'The Progress of Error,' we shall indeed observe a marked improvement, both in the smoothness of the versification (which is very conspicuous in 'Retirement') and in the more poetical handling of the theme. 'Expostulation' is a magnificent burst of impassioned feeling, and may be said in some parts of it to soar into sublimity. Yet, as Miss Seward has remarked, 'No reader could have expected the diamonds of Cowper, who had only seen the Scotch pebbles which he offered for sale at the beginning of his career.' Nevertheless the book had attracted some favourable notice. Although the Critical Review found in it nothing more than 'decent mediocrity,' and pronounced it to be 'little better than a dull sermon in very indifferent verse,' the London and Gentleman's Magazines, and the Monthly Review, 'the critical Rhadamanthus' of the day, had bestowed on it decided, though not enthusiastic praise. Mr. John Thornton had sent a copy of it to Benjamin Franklin, then American Ambassador in Paris; and his 'plaudit' was very gratifying to the author. This appreciation of his work by a stranger made him the more sensitive to the neglect of his old friends, Colman and Thurlow, neither of whom had the civility to acknowledge the presentation-copies which he sent to them. He vented his indignation with natural resentment in 'The Valediction,' written in Nov. 1783. In this year Mr. Bull sent Cowper the poems of Madame de la Mothe Guion; and these, which he thought 'the only French verse he ever read that he found agreeable,' he translated in a month. Lady Austen pressed him to write a new original poem in blank verse, which Milton had taught her to love. When he replied that she

must find a subject for him; she said, 'Oh! you can never be in want of a subject; you can write on any,—write upon this Sofa.' The 'task' thus imposed was accepted, and fulfilled—all the world knows how.

'The Sofa' was begun in June or July, 1783; and it was 'ended but not finished' on the 3rd of August. Five more books followed; and the entire 'Task' was completed in August or September, 1784. As a delay occurred in the printing, Cowper appended to it a poem which he had finished in the interim, and which he called 'Tirocinium, or a Review of Schools.' And after much vacillation on the part of author and publisher, the volume was made to include 'The History of John Gilpin,' and was finally published in July, 1785.

The new poem was read and admired by everybody. It were out of place to repeat what has been said in the Introduction to our first volume, as to the distinctive merits which made *The Task*, and the man who executed it so ably, spring forward at a bound into the forefront of literary popularity. Suffice it to say here, that it has been given to few poets to rise so suddenly into the height of favour, and to have maintained during so many successive generations the rank thus achieved. Cowper met the want of his age; and his countrymen were grateful to him for supplying their need. Men were, perhaps unconsciously to themselves, yearning for a Poetry higher and nobler, more real and more human, than what then went by that name amongst them. Cowper wanted but to gain a hearing: that gained, he was sure to be eagerly welcomed by thousands, who were wearied out with the pretty but unmeaning trifles offered to their jaded imagination. It was a *jeu d'esprit* which procured for the Poet the hearing that he wanted; a ballad,—not indeed really ephemeral as he deemed it, but of which he fancied that he ought to feel himself a little ashamed, and the authorship of which he long hesitated to acknowledge to the world. His new volume was seized with avidity by the public, not as being the production of the author of *Table Talk*, but out of a curiosity to see something more from the hand of the man who could

write the History of John Gilpin. This curiosity was amply rewarded, by the perusal of a noble poem, differing in its style and subject from anything with which the readers of Cowper's day were familiar; and appealing directly to the hearts and sympathies of all classes of Englishmen. The Monthly Reviewer of the former volume had pronounced Cowper to be 'a poet *sui generis*'; and now these words were found to be true, in a much wider sense than that in which they had been intended. All who read The Task felt that the time so long desired had at length arrived, and that a new school of Poetry was inaugurated. The Artificial School of Pope, and his mob of servile imitators, had been succeeded by the Sentimental School, of which Darwin and Hayley were the popular living representatives. It was seen at a glance, that both of these must be superseded, at once and for ever, by the new School of Nature. The first, faultless in structure, and dazzling the eye with its glitter, had been cold and ungenial as the Palace of Ice on the Neva. The second, warm and voluptuous, but too listless for passion, refined to languor, and essenced o'er with the faint scent of delicate perfumes, was as unwholesome and enervating as a hothouse filled with exotics, or as a crowded drawing-room in the London season. The one was not attuned to the sympathies of mankind at large; the other could not respond to the demands of the masculine intellect. The caterers of the Artificial School displayed on their polished board choice porcelain services, of curious workmanship, with cups of sparkling crystal, or of frosted silver; but the hungry guest, after duly admiring the unexceptionable taste and high finish of these accessories to a feast, looked round in vain for the viands, wherewith his appetite might be appeased. Those of the Sentimental School, bowing in their guest with the blandest of smiles, lapped him in beds of roses, and lulled his senses with clouds of aromatic incense, while, amid strains of softest music, they banqueted him on sweetmeats. Then uprose the trumpet note of a man as yet unknown, or known to few; and in its sound, distinct and powerful, was manly sympathy with human souls. From the hermit's cell at Olney

emerged the Poet of the Country, to claim a place in the kingdom of letters, which the Poet of the Town, long after the term of his natural life, had continued to rule with absolute sovereignty. The Bard of Nature entered the lists with the jingling rhymesters of Sentiment, and bore them down at every point, so that their very names are now known only to the curious. Thenceforward the names that should be the greatest on the roll of modern English Poets must be those of students in that School of Nature, of which Cowper was the earliest graduate. Others coming after him were destined to surpass him: but it must be by virtue of their being more deeply versed than he in Nature's lore, and therefore more fully furnished for the exposition of her mysteries of love and beauty. A Wordsworth, a Coleridge, a Shelley, a Tennyson, were to follow:—they must win their fame by advancing along the track which Cowper had pointed out to them.

We are not indeed to conclude that Cowper addressed himself to the composition of 'The Task' with any conscious design of becoming the founder of a new school of Poetry. On the contrary, what is most remarkable about this poem, and what contributed not a little to its extraordinary success, is the entire absence of design, or of any pre-conceived plan whatever. The Poet seems to have set out without knowing whither his steps would lead him, or what he was going to do. There are indications in the opening of the first Book, that Cowper had undertaken 'The Task' in the same spirit of pleasantry in which Lady Austen had imposed it. He was to write upon a Sofa: and he begins his treatment of the subject in a mock-heroic style, as if he were highly amused at the idea of having to write on so slight a theme, and were making fun of it; playing with it as a giant might play with a doll. The grandiloquent language in which he discourses, with an assumed air of the most serious gravity, about his joint stools and leatherne elbow-chairs, serves rather to betray than to conceal the laugh, with which he is inwardly enjoying the humour of the thing. There is all the air of intentional burlesque, in the frequent application of 'stock passages' out of

Milton and Shakspeare ; to which he gives such a turn of his own, and which he introduces in so odd a connexion, that his use of them amounts to a parody on the originals. But all this is only at the outset ; and after having ‘played awhile with his light task,’ indulging his sportive vein through a hundred lines or so, he strolls away on his country rambles, and thinks no more of the Sofa. What he saw as he roved along, what fruits he gathered by the way, what thoughts sprang up in his mind as it ranged yet farther than his steps, and what home joys awaited him on his return ;—all this must be heard from none but his own lips. Nothing can exceed the ease, the simplicity, the genuine courtesy, the kindly garrulity, with which he converses with all who are willing to walk by his side ; and helps them to draw from the scenes he loves the pleasure which they impart to himself, and to share with him the emotions and reflections which they stir up in his own mind. One thing indeed surprises us at first, as we listen to his glowing descriptions of Nature, or his pungent remarks on men and manners :—our charming companion, with all his natural simplicity, is very fond of long words. We look up into his face enquiringly, while he rolls out such sonorous polysyllables as ‘oscitancy,’ ‘vermicular,’ ‘vorticinous,’ or ‘stercoraceous’ ; and we have to ask ourselves twice, what he means by his peculiar use of words otherwise so familiar to us, as ‘induce,’ ‘result,’ ‘solicit,’ or ‘voluble.’ But we remember that he has been a sixth-form boy in a Public School ; and that his later years have not brought him into that practical contact with life in its business aspects, which serves to wean men from their schoolboy fondness for classical forms and idioms. And though we may have to suppress a yawn over his minute directions for the raising of cucumbers, or suspect that a little more general knowledge might have softened the severity of his strictures upon the pioneers of Natural Science ; still we confess with delight, that out of the fulness of his mental stores he has spread a rich feast before us, and that we have been seldom in the company of one more genial in his bearing towards his guests,

or better qualified to entertain them with variety of agreeable and instructive conversation.

We must return to Lady Austen. Before the publication of 'The Task,' a rupture had again taken place between her and the Olney couple. The cause of this final severance has been much debated. The account which Cowper gave of it to Unwin is not specific. 'We found the connexion,' he writes, 'on some accounts an inconvenient one. The dissimilitude was too great not to be felt continually, and consequently made our intercourse unpleasant.' To Lady Hesketh the Poet complained, that he found his leisure for study and composition sadly interrupted by his constant attendance on Lady Austen; which, though at first optional, 'long usage had made a point of good manners, and consequently of necessity.' In short, he 'was forced to neglect the "Task," to attend upon the Muse who had inspired the subject.' Cowper had written of Lady Austen to Unwin, July 29, 1781, 'She is a most agreeable woman, and has fallen in love with your mother and me.' The most recent disclosures all tend to the suggestion, that these words were true (as far as he was himself concerned) in a far more literal sense than the writer intended. Lady Austen showed Hayley some verses which Cowper had addressed to her, and which seemed to convey a proof to her—all too eager for such proof—that he was really attached to her personally. These verses—'To a Lady who wore a lock of his hair set with diamonds'—were first printed by Mr. Benham, in 1870. In them the Poet sang—

'The heart that beats beneath that breast
Is William's, well I know;
A nobler prize and richer far
Than India could bestow.'

The woman who reads these lines will surely pardon Lady Austen's misconception of their import. After all, Cowper was *not* her 'brother William'; and he was 'past the bounds of freakish youth.' A man in his fifty-fourth year might be

supposed to have laid aside the hyperbolical rhapsodies which might have meant nothing particular at half that age. But however tender the language into which Cowper's indulgence in sentiment betrayed him, he felt himself to be bound to Mrs. Unwin by so many and such ties of gratitude and affection, that when it became a question whether he should give up her, or Lady Austen, there was but one answer he could give. He therefore wrote to the latter, as Hayley informs us, that 'very tender yet resolute letter,' in which he 'explained and lamented the circumstances that forced him to renounce her society'; and which Lady Austen, 'in a moment of natural mortification,' destroyed. It was in May, 1784, that she took her final leave of Olney. She was afterwards married to M. de Tardiff, a scholar and a poet; and died in Paris, August 12, 1802.

Lady Austen's loss was in some measure made up to the Poet by a new friendship, which commenced in the same month. Mr. John Courtenay Throckmorton, the 'Benevolus' of 'The Task' (i. 262), had come into residence at Weston Underwood two years before. He confirmed to Cowper the privilege of using a private key of the park gates, which had been allowed by the former occupant of the House (*ibid.* l. 330): but the Squire of Weston and the Poet of Olney did not meet till May, 1784. Cowper and Mrs. Unwin then went by invitation to witness the ascent of a balloon from Weston Park. A week had scarcely elapsed ere they were on terms of easy intimacy with the Throckmortons, which soon ripened into a lasting friendship, notwithstanding that the latter were Roman Catholics. After the publication of 'The Task,' other friends came forward to assert their claim to stand in that relation to its author. The various members of Cowper's family, who had hitherto been satisfied with contributing to the support of one whom they regarded as hopelessly incapacitated for the real business of life, became proud to resume personal intercourse with a poet, whose fame now rendered him an ornament to their house. His uncle Ashley, and his old friend and patron the Major (now General

Cowper), were of this number: and his cousin Harriet, left a widow by the death of Sir Thomas Hesketh in 1778, renewed that interchange of letters which had been dropped on her leaving England in 1767. If Cowper was gratified by this revival of the old correspondence, all English readers have reason to be grateful for it; as the letters written to Lady Hesketh form the most charming models of epistolary composition in our language.

Cowper was at this time employed on his translation of Homer, which he had begun three or four days after the completion of 'Tirocinium,' Nov. 10, 1784. He had entered on the work as a refuge from despondency; but in the course of a twelvemonth he had got through twenty books of the Iliad, and resolved to print his translation by subscription. His Proposals led to the revival of old friendships, and the formation of new ones. His old schoolfellows, Colman, Walter Bagot, and Lord Dartmouth, as well as some strangers, like Fuseli the artist, were interested in the project, and entered into correspondence with him, either in the character of friends or of critics.

In the month of June, 1786, the vicarage of Olney was again tenanted by a lady; again the lady was in reality a visitor to Orchard Side; and again, till the November of the same year, there were walks, and drives, and harmless gaiety on all sides. But this time the visitor was Lady Hesketh; nor did any ill results ensue, save that Mr. Newton became alarmed lest the spirituality of Cowper's mind should suffer by contact with worldly relatives who had carriages, and bore titles. One very good result however did follow. Lady Hesketh saw that the house at Olney was fast falling into decay, and that the place itself was just such as might drive a sane man insane. She therefore took the matter into her own hands, and hired a house at Weston Underwood, known as 'The Lodge,' which she furnished comfortably for her cousin. He expressed his 'Gratitude' to her in the poem of that name; and, mainly through her exertions, was enabled to make the remove with 'an addition of a clear £100 per

annum to his income'—£50 of this being an annuity from the anonymous friend, whom we have seen reason to identify with Theodora Jane Cowper.

On the 15th of November, 1786, Cowper left Olney after passing nineteen years there, for Weston Lodge; where a bright prospect of happiness seemed to lie before him. But within a fortnight (and just three days after he had attained his fifty-fifth year) a heavy calamity fell upon him and the faithful friend who shared his home. This was the death, after a few days' illness, of William Unwin, the only son of the one, and the best-loved friend of the other. The effect on Cowper was disastrous. His decennial attack had been evaded in 1783; at which time both mind and sentiment were pleasingly engaged, by the writing of 'The Task' on the one hand, and the enjoyment of Lady Austen's vivacious society on the other. But the shock of his friend's death, occurring at that gloomy period of the year when his spirits were always at their lowest ebb, proved too severe for him; and in January, 1787, his mind again gave way. The derangement was of shorter duration than on the previous occasions; and in about six months' time the patient suddenly recovered, with the full power of resuming at once his correspondence and his Homeric labours. He was even equal to the exertion of receiving a succession of visitors at Weston. Amongst these was Samuel Rose, who had first called during Cowper's illness, on the way home from Glasgow University. He came ostensibly to offer the thanks of the Scottish Professors to the author of 'The Task,' for whom he left at the same time the welcome gift of a copy of Burns' Poems. Mr. and Mrs. Newton visited Weston in 1788, a year which was saddened by the death of Lady Hesketh's father, Mr. Ashley Cowper; and in the following year the Poet had the happiness of renewing his intercourse with his mother's family, after an interval of more than a quarter of a century. Young John Johnson, the son of Mrs. Cowper's niece, Catharine Donne, came to visit his kinsman in the Christmas vacation of 1789. On his return

into Norfolk, with much Homer to transcribe, and much to tell of the Poet's tender reminiscences of his mother, Mrs. Bodham (another of her nieces) sent Cowper 'the only picture of his mother to be found in all the world.' This picture, which he prized 'more highly than the richest jewel in the British crown,' reached Weston on February 25, 1790, and inspired the elegy which has for ever linked together the names of mother and son.

When Dr. Thomas Warton, the learned historian of English Poetry, died in 1790, it was Lady Hesketh's desire to use her interest on Cowper's behalf, to procure for him the post of Poet Laureate, thus rendered vacant. He, however, could not be brought to listen to the proposal, but replied in these characteristic terms to his cousin, July 8, 1790: 'Heaven guard my brows from the wreath you mention, whatever wreath beside may hereafter adorn them! It would be a leaden extinguisher clapped on all the fire of my genius, and I should never more produce a line worth reading. To speak seriously, it would make me miserable.'

The Homer had now reached its completion. When Cowper first undertook the translation, he proposed to himself to write forty lines each day. But so many interruptions had occurred, and so much time was expended on revision, that nearly seven years were consumed on the work. The manuscript was sent to Johnson, September 8, 1790, and the whole appeared in June, 1791. Johnson took all the expenses on himself, and paid Cowper £1000, besides leaving the copyright in his hands. The translation was favourably received by the public. It was acknowledged to be a far more faithful and scholarly rendering of Homer than Pope's. The old traditions indeed made some readers doubt the propriety of using blank verse; and Thurlow, who was one of these, took the occasion to revive his former acquaintance with Cowper, by corresponding with him on this point; and avowed himself at last a convert. But Pope's Homer and Cowper's Homer alike belong to the class of great works which are to be found in every library, but are

seldom taken down from the shelves, unless in order to be dusted.

The years occupied by Cowper on this work might have brought him a far wider extension of fame, had Lady Austen been still at hand to prompt the composition of original poems, or had he not already embarked on the undertaking before Lady Hesketh arrived to fill the vacant post of friend and counsellor. Yet the mental excitement attendant on the comparatively mechanical employment of translation was less than that which original composition would probably have occasioned; while at the same time Homer afforded regular occupation, sufficient to interest the mind without fatiguing it.

No sooner were these labours brought to a close, than the Poet began to seek new subjects for his Muse. Lady Hesketh proposed to him the Mediterranean Sea; but with the instinct of a man who knows his own powers and their limits, he at once decided that this was a topic not within his range. He listened more kindly to the suggestion of Mr. Buchanan, a neighbouring clergyman, that he should write on 'The Four Ages': namely, the infancy, youth, manhood, and old age of man: but he left behind him no more than a 'brief fragment of an extensive projected poem' on this theme. He advanced farther in a poem on Yardley Oak, a subject of his own selection, which he began in 1791; and which, had he continued it, would have been in every way worthy of his fame. It is the judgment of Southey, that Cowper 'never bestowed more labour on any of his compositions than he did upon the commencement of this, nor did he ever labour more successfully.' And Mr. Hayley describes it as 'one of the richest and most highly finished pieces of versification that ever did honour to the fertile genius' of its author. Unfortunately this poem was laid aside in favour of a project of his publisher, Johnson; which was, to bring out a magnificent edition of Milton, with illustrations by Fuseli, and with Cowper for editor. Notwithstanding his ardent admiration of Milton, Cowper could not get on with this work.

He found it easy indeed to translate the Latin and Italian poems of his great master; but the labour of annotation was irksome to him. The attempt proved abortive: but out of it grew Cowper's acquaintance with Hayley. That amiable man and (in his own day) popular poet was himself engaged by another publisher, to superintend an edition of Milton. He wrote to Cowper to disclaim all idea of rivalry with him; and this graceful introduction of himself speedily led to a strong mutual regard and attachment.

The autumn of 1791 was the last season of hilarity for Cowper. Lady Hesketh was staying at the Lodge, and at Weston House was Miss Stapleton (the 'Catharina' of his song), soon to become Mrs. George Courtenay. But all gladness of heart fled when, in the month of December, Mrs. Unwin was seized with paralysis. It is true that the attack was a slight one, nor did it last long: and in May, 1792, Weston was enlivened by a visit from Hayley. He had not been there many days, when Mrs. Unwin was prostrated by another and more serious seizure of the same nature. From this also she rallied sufficiently to be able to accompany Cowper on the return-visit to Hayley, at Earham, near Chichester. Here they remained six weeks, enjoying the society of their accomplished host, and of several of his literary friends, whom he invited to meet the hero of his worship. They returned to Weston in September, and from that time Mrs. Unwin declined rapidly into a state of second childishness. Now it was, that Cowper began to repay in kind the affectionate tendance which he had so constantly received at her hands. He watched over her with the tenderness of a woman; he laid himself out to indulge her every whim, and to anticipate all her real needs; he was the only person of those about her, who made no complaints of the querulous and exacting temper of the poor invalid.

The anxiety and fatigue arising from such close attendance on Mrs. Unwin soon began to tell upon the sympathetic nature of Cowper himself; and he sank into that pitiable

condition of mind, from which it was ordained that he should never fully emerge. There were times indeed when the cloud lifted, and he was able to enjoy communion with friends, and to throw off occasional verses during his lucid intervals. He received visits in the course of 1793 from Lady Hesketh, J. Johnson, Rose, and Lawrence (who took his portrait); and in the autumn of the same year he wrote those affecting stanzas 'To Mary,' of which Hayley says, 'I question if any language on earth can exhibit a specimen of verse more exquisitely tender.' Yet all this while he was sinking into lower and lower depths. There was a new element of superstition in his delusions, too humiliating to be dwelt on. At length came the tardy recognition of his literary claims, in the form of a pension from the Crown of £300 a year (July 5, 1794); but Cowper was too far gone to appreciate it, or even to be sensible of the fact.

At this juncture Dr. Willis, the physician who had been of so much service to King George III, was consulted on behalf of the sufferer. Change of scene was all that could be prescribed. Cowper's affectionate kinsman Johnson accordingly conveyed him, with his now helpless fellow-sufferer Mrs. Unwin, into Norfolk, in July, 1795—first to North Tuddenham; then to Mundesley, on the coast, near Cromer; next to Dunham Lodge, near Swaffham; then, in the summer of 1796, to Mundesley again; and finally, in October of that year, to East Dereham. Here the Angel of Death brought to Mary Unwin 'a kind release from her imperfect state.' She died December 17, 1796, at the age of seventy-two. It may be doubted whether Cowper was in a condition to realise the fact of this separation: in any case he never mentioned her name again. At various intervals, he was enabled to apply himself to the revision of his Homer, and took pleasure in hearing his own poems and other books read to him. But for the most part, the cloud lay dark and chill upon his spirit. His last original piece was written on December 20, 1799. He called it 'The Castaway.' There is in it nothing to horrify the reader, as the title might

suggest; but much to 'engender sacred pity.' It is not the appalling shriek of the tortured soul, still struggling fiercely with the powers of darkness; it is rather the plaintive wail of one who has from sheer exhaustion given up the contest, and resigned himself to an uncontrollable destiny.

At length, through God's great mercy, the physical health which had continued unimpaired throughout the mental conflict, gave signs of failure. In February, 1800, dropsy appeared in the feet and ankles. A few weeks longer, and the poor shattered vessel, so long buffeted by tempestuous billows on the sea of life, drifted into the peaceful haven of rest. On the 25th of April, 1800, and in his sixty-ninth year, William Cowper died. And if strong men, pilgrims to the church of Dereham, have dropped tears of brotherly sympathy while standing before the tomb raised by the loving hands of Harriet Hesketh, in the Chapel of St. Edward, have not the angels rejoiced?

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

- 1731. Cowper born at Great Berkhamstead, Herts, November 26.
- 1737. He loses his mother, February 13; and is then sent to school at Market Street.
- 1739. War declared against Spain, October 19.
- 1741. Retirement of Sir R. Walpole. Cowper enters Westminster School.
- 1743. Victory of Dettingen, June 16.
- 1744. War declared against France, March 31. Alex. Pope died, aet. 56, May 30.
- 1745. Battle of Fontenoy, April 30. The Young Pretender lands in Scotland, July 25; wins the battle of Prestonpans, September 21.
- 1746. Charles Edward's Rebellion crushed by his defeat at Culloden, April 16.
- 1748. The War of the Austrian Succession ended by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, October 7. James Thomson died, aet. 48, August 27. Cowper is entered at the Middle Temple, April 29.
- 1751. Arcot taken from the French by Clive, August 31.
- 1753 or 1754. Cowper's first attack of despondency.
- 1754. Henry Fielding died, aet. 47, October. Cowper called to the Bar, June 14.
- 1756. War declared against France, May 18. Minorca taken from the English, June 28. Cowper loses his father, August 3.

1757. Pitt's first Administration. The Seven Years' War begins. Clive retakes Calcutta from Surajah Dowlah, January 2; wins the battle of Plassey, June 23.

1759. Victory of Minden, August 1. Wolfe killed at the taking of Quebec, September 13. Cowper removes to the Inner Temple.

1760. Accession of King George III, October 25.

1761. Warren Hastings becomes a Member of Council at Calcutta.

1762. War declared against Spain, January 4. Lord Bute succeeds Pitt.

1763. The Seven Years' War ended by the Peace of Paris, whereby France cedes Canada to Great Britain, February 10. G. Grenville succeeds Bute. Cowper is confined at St. Alban's, December 7.

1765. Grenville's Stamp Act passed, March 22. Rockingham succeeds Grenville in July. The Treaty of Allahabad cedes Bengal to the East India Company, August 12. Dr. Edward Young died, aet. 81, April 12. Cowper becomes an inmate of Mr. Unwin's house at Huntingdon, November 11.

1766. Pitt created Earl of Chatham, August 4. His second Ministry.

1767. C. Townshend's Revenues Act. Cowper settles at Olney, Bucks, September 14.

1768. Chatham resigns; the Duke of Grafton continues at the Treasury.

1770. Lord North succeeds Grafton. William Wordsworth born, April 7.

1772. Warren Hastings Governor of Bengal, April 13. Samuel Taylor Coleridge born, October 21.

1773. Cowper is deranged for the third time.

1774. The Boston Port Bill passed, March 25. Warren Hastings Governor-General of all India. Oliver Goldsmith died, aet. 46, April 4.

1775. American War begins with the battle of Lexington, April 19; and of Bunker's Hill, June 17.

1776. American Declaration of Independence, July 4. David Hume died, aet. 65, August 25.

1777. The Convention of Saratoga, October 17.

1778. French Treaty of Alliance with the American States, February 6. Death of Chatham, May 14.

1779. Spain joins the Alliance of the States. David Garrick died, aet. 63, January 20. The Olney Hymns published, February 15.

1780. Rodney's victory at Cape St. Vincent, January 16. The Armed Neutrality. The Gordon Riots in London, June 2-8. War declared against Holland, December 20.

1781. Cornwallis' Capitulation at York Town, October 19. Sir Eyre Coote defeats Hyder Ali at Porto Novo, July 1; and at Pollilore, August 27.

1782. Lord North resigns, March 15; is succeeded by Rockingham; and he (on his death, July 1) by Lord Shelburne. Preliminaries of Peace with the United States, Nov. 30. Cowper publishes his first volume of Poems, March 1.

1783. The Peace of Versailles, September 3.

1784. Pitt's East India Bill passed. Dr. Samuel Johnson died, aet. 75, December.

1785. Cowper publishes 'The Task,' in July.

1786. Cowper removes from Olney to Weston Underwood, November 15.

1787. He is deranged for the fourth time.

1788. The Trial of Warren Hastings began, February 13: (he was acquitted in 1795). Lord Byron born, January 22.

1789. French Revolution breaks out: the Bastille destroyed, July 14.

1791. Cowper publishes his Translation of Homer, in June.

1792. Sir Joshua Reynolds died, aet. 69, February 23.

1793. The Reign of Terror in Paris begins, May 31.

1794. Edw. Gibbon died, aet. 57, January 16. Cowper receives a Pension of £300 from the Crown, July 5.

- 1795. Cowper is removed into Norfolk, in July.
- 1796. Death of Mrs. Unwin, December 17.
- 1797. Edmund Burke died, aet. 69, July 9.
- 1799. Napoleon Buonaparte declared First Consul, November 10.
- 1800. Cowper dies at East Dereham, Norfolk, aet. 68, April 25.

THE TASK.

IN SIX BOOKS.

Fit surculus arbor. —ANONYM.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE history of the following production is briefly this: A lady, fond of blank verse, demanded a poem of that kind from the Author, and gave him the *Sofa* for a subject. He obeyed; and having much leisure, connected another subject with it; and pursuing the train of thought to which his situation and turn of mind led him, brought forth at length, instead of the trifle which he at first intended, a serious affair—a Volume.

In the poem on the subject of Education, he would be very sorry to stand suspected of having aimed his censure at any particular school. His objections are such as naturally apply themselves to schools in general. If there were not, as for the most part there is, wilful neglect in those who manage them, and an omission even of such discipline as they are susceptible of, the objects are yet too numerous for minute attention; and the aching hearts of ten thousand parents, mourning under the bitterest of all disappointments, attest the truth of the allegation. His quarrel, therefore, is with the mischief at large, and not with any particular instance of it.

THE TASK.

BOOK I.

THE SOFA.

ARGUMENT :—Historical deduction of seats, from the stool to the sofa, 1—A schoolboy's ramble, 109—A walk in the country, 140—The scene described, 159—Rural sounds as well as sights delightful, 181—Another walk, 210—Mistake concerning the charms of solitude corrected, 233—Colonnades commended, 252—Alcove, and the view from it, 278—The wilderness, 350—The grove, 354—The thresher, 356—The necessity and the benefits of exercise, 367—The works of nature superior to, and in many instances inimitable by art, 409—The wearisomeness of what is commonly called a life of pleasure, 462—Change of scene sometimes expedient, 506—A common described, and the character of Crazy Kate introduced, 526—Gipsies, 557—The blessings of a civilised life, 592—The state most favourable to virtue, 600—The South Sea islanders compassionated, but chiefly Omai, 620—His present state of mind supposed, 654—Civilised life friendly to virtue, but not great cities, 678—Great cities, and London in particular, allowed their due praise, but censured, 693—Fête champêtre, 739—The book concludes with a reflection on the fatal effects of dissipation and effeminacy upon our public measures, 749.

I SING the SOFA. I who lately sang
Truth, Hope, and Charity, and touched with awe
The solemn chords, and with a trembling hand,
Escaped with pain from that adventurous flight,
Now seek repose upon an humbler theme ;
The theme though humble, yet august and proud
The occasion—for the Fair commands the song.

Time was, when clothing, sumptuous or for use,
Save their own painted skins, our sires had none.

As yet black breeches were not, satin smooth,
Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile;
The hardy chief, upon the rugged rock
Washed by the sea, or on the gravelly bank
Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,
Fearless of wrong, reposed his weary strength.
Those barbarous ages past, succeeded next
The birthday of Invention; weak at first,
Dull in design, and clumsy to perform.

10

Joint-stools were then created; on three legs
Upborne they stood. Three legs upholding firm
A massy slab, in fashion square or round.
On such a STOOL immortal Alfred sat,
And swayed the sceptre of his infant realms;
And such in ancient halls and mansions drear
May still be seen; but perforated sore,
And drilled in holes, the solid oak is found,
By worms voracious eating through and through.

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At length a generation more refined
Improved the simple plan; made three legs four,
Gave them a twisted form vermicular,
And o'er the seat, with plenteous wadding stuffed,
Induced a splendid cover, green and blue,
Yellow and red, of tapestry richly wrought
And woven close, or needlework sublime.
There might ye see the peony spread wide,
The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,
Lapdog and lambkin with black, staring eyes,
And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.

20

Now came the cane from India, smooth and bright
With Nature's varnish; severed into stripes
That interlaced each other, these supplied
Of texture firm a lattice-work, that braced
The new machine, and it became a CHAIR.
But restless was the Chair; the back erect
Distressed the weary loins that felt no ease;
The slippery seat betrayed the sliding part
That pressed it, and the feet hung dangling down,

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Anxious in vain to find the distant floor.
 These for the rich: the rest, whom Fate had placed
 In modest mediocrity, content 50
 With base materials, sat on well-tanned hides,
 Obdurate and unyielding, glassy smooth,
 With here and there a tuft of crimson yarn,
 Or scarlet crewel, in the cushion fixed;
 If cushion might be called, what harder seemed
 Than the firm oak of which the frame was formed.
 No want of timber then was felt or feared
 In Albion's happy isle. The lumber stood
 Ponderous, and fixed by its own massy weight.
 But elbows still were wanting; these, some say,
 An alderman of Cripplegate contrived,
 And some ascribe the invention to a priest
 Burly and big, and studious of his ease.
 But rude at first, and not with easy slope
 Receding wide, they pressed against the ribs,
 And bruised the side, and, elevated high,
 Taught the raised shoulders to invade the ears. 65
 Long time elapsed or e'er our rugged sires
 Complained, though incommodiously pent in,
 And ill at ease behind. The ladies first
 'Gan murmur, as became the softer sex.
 Ingenious Fancy, never better pleased
 Than when employed to accommodate the fair,
 Heard the sweet moan with pity, and devised
 The soft SETTEE; one elbow at each end,
 And in the midst an elbow, it received,
 United yet divided, twain at once;
 So sit two kings of Brentford on one throne,
 And so two citizens who take the air,
 Close packed and smiling, in a chaise and one. 75
 But relaxation of the languid frame,
 By soft recumbency of outstretched limbs,
 Was bliss reserved for happier days;—so slow
 The growth of what is excellent, so hard
 To attain perfection in this nether world. 80
 85

Thus first Necessity invented Stools,
Convenience next suggested Elbow Chairs,
And Luxury the accomplished SOFA last.

The nurse sleeps sweetly, hired to watch the sick
Whom snoring she disturbs. As sweetly he 90
Who quits the coachbox at the midnight hour
To sleep within the carriage more secure,
His legs depending at the open door.

Sweet sleep enjoys the curate in his desk,
The tedious rector drawling o'er his head, 95
And sweet the clerk below. But neither sleep
Of lazy nurse who snores the sick man dead,
Nor his who quits the box at midnight hour
To slumber in the carriage more secure,
Nor sleep enjoyed by curate in his desk, 100
Nor yet the dozings of the clerk, are sweet,
Compared with the repose the Sofa yields.

Oh ! may I live exempted (while I live
Guiltless of pampered appetite obscene) 105
From pangs arthritic that infest the toe
Of libertine excess. The Sofa suits
The gouty limb, 'tis true; but gouty limb,
Though on a Sofa, may I never feel:

{ For I have loved the rural walk through lanes
Of grassy swarth, close cropped by nibbling sheep, 110
And skirted thick with intertexture firm
Of thorny boughs: have loved the rural walk
O'er hills, through valleys, and by river's brink
E'er since, a truant boy, I passed my bounds,
To enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames; 115
{ And still remember, nor without regret,
Of hours that sorrow since has much endeared,
How oft, my slice of pocket-store consumed,
Still hungering, pennyless, and far from home,
I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws, 120
Or blushing crabs, or berries that emboss
The bramble, black as jet, or sloes austere.
Hard fare ! but such as boyish appetite

Disdains not, nor the palate, undepraved
By culinary arts, unsavoury deems. 125

No Sofa then awaited my return,
Nor Sofa then I needed. Youth repairs
His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil
Incurring short fatigue: and though our years,
As life declines, speed rapidly away, 130
And not a year but pilfers as he goes
Some youthful grace that age would gladly keep,
A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees
Their length and colour from the locks they spare;
The elastic spring of an unwearied foot 135
That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence,
That play of lungs, inhaling and again
Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes
Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,
Mine have not pilfered yet; nor yet impaired 140
My relish of fair prospect; scenes that soothed
Or charmed me young, no longer young, I find
Still soothing, and of power to charm me still.

And witness, dear companion of my walks,
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive 145
Fast locked in mine, with pleasure such as Love,
Confirmed by long experience of thy worth
And well tried virtues, could alone inspire—
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.

Thou knowest my praise of Nature most sincere, 150
And that my raptures are not conjured up
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
But genuine, and art partner of them all.
How oft upon yon Eminence our pace

Has slackened to a pause, and we have borne 155
The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew,
While Admiration, feeding at the eye,
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.
Thence with what pleasure have we just discerned

The distant plough slow-moving, and beside 160
His labouring team that swerved not from the track,

The sturdy swain diminished to a boy !
 Here Ouse, slow-winding through a level plain
 Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,
 Conducts the eye along his sinuous course
 Delighted. There, fast rooted in their bank,
 Stand, never overlooked, our favourite elms,
 That screen the herdsman's solitary hut ;
 While far beyond, and overthwart the stream,
 That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale,
 The sloping land recedes into the clouds ;
 Displaying, on its varied side, the grace
 Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tower,
 Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
 Just undulates upon the listening ear,
 Groves, heaths, and smoking villages, remote.
 Scenes must be beautiful which, daily viewed,
 Please daily, and whose novelty survives
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years.
Praise justly due to those that I describe.

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Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds,
 Exhilarate the spirit, and restore
 The tone of languid Nature. Mighty winds
 That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood
 Of ancient growth, make music not unlike
The dash of Ocean on his winding shore,
 And lull the spirit while they fill the mind,
 Unnumbered branches waving in the blast,
 And all their leavess fast fluttering, all at once.
 Nor less composure waits upon the roar
Of distant floods, or on the softer voice
Of neighbouring fountain, or of rills that slip
Through the cleft rock, and, chiming as they fall
Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length
 In matted grass, that with a (livelier green
 Betrays the secret of their silent course,)
 Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,
 But animated Nature sweeter still,
To soothe and satisfy the human ear.

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Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one 200
 The livelong night: nor these alone, whose notes
 Nice-fingered Art must emulate in vain,
 But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime
 In still repeated circles, screaming loud,
 The jay, the pie, and even the boding owl
 That hails the rising moon, have charms for me. 205
 Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,
 Yet heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns,
 And only there, please highly for their sake.

Peace to the artist whose ingenious thought 210
 Devised the Weatherhouse, that useful toy !
 Fearless of humid air and gathering rains,
 Forth steps the man—an emblem of myself !
 More delicate his timorous mate retires.

When Winter soaks the fields, and female feet 215
 Too weak to struggle with tenacious clay,
 Or ford the rivulets, are best at home,
 The task of new discoveries falls on me.
 At such a season, and with such a charge,
 Once went I forth, and found, till then unknown, 220
 A cottage, whither oft we since repair:
 'Tis perched upon the green hill top, but close
 Environed with a ring of branching elms
 That overhang the thatch, itself unseen
 Peeps at the vale below; so thick beset
 With foliage of such dark redundant growth, 225
 I called the low-roofed lodge the Peasant's Nest.
 And hidden as it is, and far remote
 From such unpleasing sounds as haunt the ear
 In village or in town, the bay of curs
 Incessant, clinking hammers, grinding wheels, 230
 And infants clamorous whether pleased or pained,
 Oft have I wished the peaceful covert mine.
 Here, I have said, at least I should possess
 The poet's treasure, silence, and indulge
 The dreams of fancy, tranquil and secure. 235
 Vain thought! the dweller in that still retreat

Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.
 Its elevated site forbids the wretch
 To drink sweet waters of the crystal well; 240
 He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,
 And, heavy laden, brings his beverage home,
 Far fetched and little worth; nor seldom waits,
 Dependant on the baker's punctual call,
 To hear his creaking panniers at the door, 245
 Angry and sad, and his last crust consumed.
 So farewell envy of the Peasant's Nest!
 If Solitude make scant the means of life,
 Society for me! Thou seeming sweet,
 Be still a pleasing object in my view, 250
 My visit still, but never mine abode.

Not distant far, a length of Colonnade
 Invites us. Monument of ancient taste,
 Now scorned, but worthy of a better fate.
 Our fathers knew the value of a screen 255
 From sultry suns, and in their shaded walks,
 And long protracted bowers, enjoyed at noon
 The gloom and coolness of declining day.
 We bear our shades about us; self-deprived
 Of other screen, the thin umbrella spread, 260
 And range an Indian waste without a tree.
 Thanks to Benevolus—he spares me yet
 These chestnuts ranged in corresponding lines,
 And though himself so polished, still reprieves
 The obsolete prolixity of shade. 265

Descending now (but cautious, lest too fast)
 A sudden steep upon a Rustic Bridge,
 We pass a gulf in which the willows dip
 Their pendant boughs, stooping as if to drink. 270
 Hence, ankle-deep in moss and flowery thyme,
 We mount again, and feel at every step
 Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft,
 Raised by the mole, the miner of the soil.
 He, not unlike the great ones of mankind,
 Disfigures Earth, and, plotting in the dark, 275

Toils much to earn a monumental pile,
That may record the mischiefs he has done.

The summit gained, behold the proud Alcove
That crowns it! yet not all its pride secures
The grand retreat from injuries impressed
By rural carvers, who with knives deface
The panels, leaving an obscure, rude name,
In characters uncouth, and spelt amiss.

So strong the zeal to immortalize himself
Beats in the breast of man, that even a few,
Few transient years, won from the abyss abhorred
Of blank oblivion, seem a glorious prize,
And even to a clown.—Now roves the eye,
And posted on this speculative height,

Exults in its command. (The sheepfold here
Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.
At first, progressive as a stream, they seek
The middle field; but scattered by degrees,
Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land.

There from the sunburnt hayfield homeward creeps
The loaded wain, while lightened of its charge,
The wain that meets it passes swiftly by,
The boorish driver leaning o'er his team
Vociferous, and impatient of delay.

Nor less attractive is the woodland scene,
Diversified with trees of every growth,
Alike yet various. (Here the grey smooth trunks
Of ash, or lime, or beech, distinctly shine,
Within the twilight of their distant shades;

There, lost behind a rising ground, the wood
Seems sunk, and shortened to its topmost boughs.

No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
Though each its hue peculiar; paler some,
And of a wannish grey; the willow such,
And poplar that with silver lines his leaf,
And ash far-stretching his umbrageous arm;
Of deeper green the elm; and deeper still,

rich distinctions

305
310

Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak.

Some glossy-leaved, and shining in the sun,

The maple, and the beech of oily nuts

315

Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve

Diffusing odours: nor unnoted pass

The sycamore, capricious in attire,

Now green, now tawny, and ere autumn yet

Have changed the woods, in scarlet honours bright.

320

O'er these, but far beyond, a spacious map

Of hill and valley interposed between,

The Ouse, dividing the well-watered land,

Now glitters in the sun and now retires,

As bashful, yet impatient to be seen.

325

Hence the declivity is sharp and short,

And such the reascent; between them weeps

A little Naiad her impoverished urn

All summer long, which winter fills again.

The folded gates would bar my progress now,

330

But that the lord of this enclosed demesne,

Communicative of the good he owns,

Admits me to a share: the guiltless eye

Commits no wrong, nor wastes what it enjoys.

Refreshing change! where now the blazing sun?

335

By short transition we have lost his glare,

And stepped at once into a cooler clime.

Ye fallen avenues! once more I mourn

Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice

That yet a remnant of your race survives.

340

How airy and how light the graceful arch,

Yet awful as the consecrated roof

Re-echoing pious anthems! while beneath

The chequered earth seems restless as a flood

Brushed by the wind. (So sportive is the light

345

Shot through the boughs, it dances as they dance,

Shadow and sunshine intermingling quick,

And darkening and enlightening, as the leaves

Play wanton, every moment, every spot.)

And now, with nerves new braced and spirits cheered,

350

We tread the Wilderness, whose well-rolled walks,

With curvature of slow and easy sweep—
Deception innocent—give ample space
To narrow bounds. (The grove receives us next;
Between the upright shafts of whose tall elms
We may discern the thresher at his task.
355

Thump after thump resounds the constant flail,
That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls
Full on the destined ear. Wide flies the chaff,
The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist
Of atoms, sparkling in the noonday beam.
360

Come hither, ye that press your beds of down
And sleep not; see him sweating o'er his bread
Before he eats it.—'Tis the primal curse,
But softened into mercy; made the pledge
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.
365

By ceaseless action all that is subsists.
Constant rotation of the unwearied wheel
That Nature rides upon, maintains her health,
Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads
370

An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves;
Its own revolvency upholds the world.
Winds from all quarters agitate the air,
And fit the limpid element for use,
Else noxious: oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams,
375

All feel the freshening impulse, and are cleansed
By restless undulation; even the oak
Thrives by the rude concussion of the storm;
He seems indeed indignant, and to feel
The impression of the blast with proud disdain,
380

Frowning as if in his unconscious arm
He held the thunder. But the monarch owes
His firm stability to what he scorns,
More fixed below, the more disturbed above.
The law by which all creatures else are bound,
385

Binds man, the lord of all. Himself derives
No mean advantage from a kindred cause,
From strenuous toil his hours of sweetest ease.
The sedentary stretch their lazy length

When Custom bids, but no refreshment find,
For none they need: the languid eye, the cheek
Deserted of its bloom, the flaccid, shrunk,
And withered muscle, and the vapid soul,
Reproach their owner with that love of rest
To which he forfeits even the rest he loves.

390

Not such the alert and active. Measure life
By its true worth, the comforts it affords,
And theirs alone seems worthy of the name.

395

{ Good health, and, its associate in the most,
Good temper; spirits prompt to undertake,

400

And not soon spent, though in an arduous task;
The powers of fancy and strong thought are theirs;
Even age itself seems privileged in them
With clear exemption from its own defects.

A sparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front

405

The veteran shows, and gracing a grey beard
With youthful smiles, descends toward the grave
Sprightly, and old almost without decay.

Like a coy maiden, Ease, when courted most,
Farthest retires—an idol, at whose shrine
Who oftenest sacrifice are favoured least.

410

{ The love of Nature, and the scenes she draws,
Is Nature's dictate.) Strange! there should be found,
Who, self-imprisoned in their proud saloons,
Renounce the odours of the open field
For the unscented fictions of the loom;
Who, satisfied with only pencilled scenes,
Prefer to the performance of a God
The inferior wonders of an artist's hand.

415

{ Lovely indeed the mimic works of Art;
But Nature's works far lovelier. I admire,
None more admires, the painter's magic skill,
Who shows me that which I shall never see,
Conveys a distant country into mine,
And throws Italian light on English walls.

420

{ But imitative strokes can do no more
Than please the eye—sweet Nature every sense.)

425

*art
< nature*

The air salubrious of her lofty hills,
 The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,
 And music of her woods—no works of man
 May rival these; these all bespeak a power
 Peculiar, and exclusively her own.

430

Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast;
 'Tis free to all—'tis every day renewed;
 Who scorns it, starves deservedly at home.
 He does not scorn it, who, imprisoned long
 In some unwholesome dungeon, and a prey
 To sallow sickness, which the vapours, dank
 And clammy, of his dark abode have bred,
 Escapes at last to liberty and light.

435

His cheek recovers soon its healthful hue,) *health* 440
 His eye relumines its extinguished fires,
 He walks, he leaps, he runs—is winged with joy,
 And riots in the sweets of every breeze.

He does not scorn it, who has long endured
 A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs;
 Nor yet the mariner, his blood inflamed
 With acrid salts, his very heart athirst
 To gaze at Nature in her green array;
 Upon the ship's tall side he stands, possessed
 With visions prompted by intense desire; 450
 Fair fields appear below, such as he left
 Far distant, such as he would die to find—
 He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more.

The spleen is seldom felt where Flora reigns; 455
 The lowering eye, the petulance, the frown,
 And sullen sadness, that o'ershade, distort,
 And mar the face of Beauty, when no cause
 For such immeasurable woe appears,
 These Flora banishes, and gives the fair 460
 Sweet smiles, and bloom less transient than her own.
 It is the constant revolution, stale
 And tasteless, of the same repeated joys,
 That palls and satiates, and makes languid life
 A pedler's pack, that bows the bearer down. 465

Health suffers, and the spirits ebb; the heart
 Recoils from its own choice—at the full feast
 Is famished—finds no music in the song,
 No smartness in the jest, and wonders why.

Yet thousands still desire to journey on,
 Though halt, and weary of the path they tread.

The paralytic, who can hold her cards
 But cannot play them, borrows a friend's hand
 To deal and shuffle, to divide and sort

Her mingled suits and sequences, and sits,
 Spectatress both and spectacle, a sad

And silent cipher, while her proxy plays.

Others are dragged into the crowded room
 Between supporters; and, once seated, sit,

Through downright inability to rise,

Till the stout bearers lift the corpse again.

These speak a loud memento. Yet even these
 Themselves love life, and cling to it, as he
 That overhangs a torrent, to a twig.

They love it, and yet loathe it; fear to die,
 Yet scorn the purposes for which they live.

Then wherefore not renounce them? No—the dread,
 The slavish dread of solitude, that breeds
 Reflection and remorse, the fear of shame,
 And their inveterate habits, all forbid.

Whom call we gay? That honour has been long
 The boast of mere pretenders to the name.

The innocent are gay—the lark is gay,
 That dries his feathers, saturate with dew,
 Beneath the rosy cloud, while yet the beams
 Of dayspring overshoot his humble nest.

The peasant too, a witness of his song,
 Himself a songster, is as gay as he.
 But save me from the gaiety of those

Whose headaches nail them to a noonday bed;
 And save me too from theirs whose haggard eyes
 Flash desperation, and betray their pangs
 For property stripped off by cruel chance;

470

475

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495

500

From gaiety that fills the bones with pain,
The mouth with blasphemy, the heart with woe. 505

The Earth was made so various, that the mind
Of desultory man, studious of change,
And pleased with novelty, might be indulged.
Prospects, however lovely, may be seen
Till half their beauties fade; the weary sight, 510
Too well acquainted with their smiles, slides off
Fastidious, seeking less familiar scenes.

Then snug enclosures in the sheltered vale,
Where frequent hedges intercept the eye,
Delight us, happy to renounce awhile, 515
Not senseless of its charms, what still we love,
That such short absence may endear it more.
Then forests, or the savage rock, may please,
That hides the seamew in his hollow clefts
Above the reach of man: his hoary head, 520
Conspicuous many a league, the mariner,
Bound homeward, and in hope already there,
Greets with three cheers exulting. At his waist
A girdle of half-withered shrubs he shows,
And at his feet the baffled billows die. 525

The common, overgrown with fern, and rough
With prickly goss, that shapeless and deform,
And dangerous to the touch, has yet its bloom,
And decks itself with ornaments of gold,
Yields no unpleasing ramble; there the turf 530
Smells fresh, and, rich in odoriferous herbs
And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense
With luxury of unexpected sweets.

There often wanders one, whom better days
Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimmed
With lace, and hat with splendid riband bound. 535
A serving-maid was she, and fell in love
With one who left her, went to sea, and died.
Her Fancy followed him through foaming waves
To distant shores, and she would sit and weep
At what a sailor suffers; Fancy too, 540

Delusive most where warmest wishes are,
 Would oft anticipate his glad return,
 And dream of transports she was not to know.
 She heard the doleful tidings of his death—
 And never smiled again! and now she roams
 The dreary waste; there spends the livelong day,
 And there, unless when Charity forbids,
 The livelong night. A tattered apron hides,
 Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides, a gown
 More tattered still; and both but ill conceal
 A bosom heaved with never ceasing sighs.

545

She begs an idle pin of all she meets,
 And hoards them in her sleeve; but needful food,
 Though pressed with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,
 Though pinched with cold, asks never.—Kate is crazed!

555

I see a column of slow-rising smoke
 O'ertop the lofty wood that skirts the wild.
 A vagabond and useless tribe there eat
 Their miserable meal. A kettle, slung
 Between two poles upon a stick transverse,
 Receives the morsel—flesh obscene of dog,
 Or vermin, or at best of cock purloined
 From his accustomed perch. Hard-faring race!

560

They pick their fuel out of every hedge,
 Which, kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquenched
 The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide
 Their fluttering rags, and shows a tawny skin,
 The vellum of the pedigree they claim.

565

Great skill have they in palmistry, and more
 To conjure clean away the gold they touch,
 Conveying worthless dross into its place;
 Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.
 Strange! that a creature rational, and cast
 In human mould, should brutalize by choice
 His nature, and though capable of arts
 By which the world might profit, and himself,
 Self-banished from society, prefer
 Such squalid sloth to honourable toil!

570

575

Yet even these, though, feigning sickness oft, 580
 They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb,
 And vex their flesh with artificial sores,
 Can change their whine into a mirthful note
 When safe occasion offers; and with dance,
 And music of the bladder and the bag,
 Beguile their woes, and make the woods resound.
 Such health and gaiety of heart enjoy
 The houseless rovers of the sylvan world;
 And breathing wholesome air, and wandering much,
 Need other physic none to heal the effects 590
 Of loathsome diet, penury, and cold.

Blest he, though undistinguished from the crowd
 By wealth or dignity, who dwells secure,
 Where man, by nature fierce, has laid aside
 His fierceness, having learnt, though slow to learn, 595
 The manners and the arts of civil life.
 His wants, indeed, are many; but supply
 Is obvious, placed within the easy reach
 Of temperate wishes and industrious hands.
 Here virtue thrives as in her proper soil; 600
 Not rude and surly, and beset with thorns,
 And terrible to sight, as when she springs,
 (If e'er she spring spontaneous) in remote
 And barbarous climes, where violence prevails,
 And strength is lord of all; but gentle, kind, 605
 By culture tamed, by liberty refreshed,
 And all her fruits by radiant truth matured.
 War and the chase engross the savage whole;
 War followed for revenge, or to supplant
 The envied tenants of some happier spot, 610
 The chase for sustenance, precarious trust!
 His hard condition with severe constraint
 Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth
 Of wisdom, proves a school in which he learns
 Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate, 615
 Mean self-attachment, and scarce aught beside.
 Thus fare the shivering natives of the north,

And thus the rangers of the western world
 Where it advances far into the deep,
 Towards the Antarctic. Even the favoured isles 620
 So lately found, although the constant sun
 Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,
 Can boast but little virtue; and inert
 Through plenty, lose in morals what they gain
 In manners—victims of luxurious ease. 625

These therefore I can pity, placed remote
 From all that Science traces, Art invents,
 Or Inspiration teaches; and enclosed
 In boundless oceans, never to be passed
 By navigators uninformed as they, 630
 Or ploughed perhaps by British bark again.
 But far beyond the rest, and with most cause,
 Thee, gentle savage! whom no love of thee
 Or thine, but curiosity, perhaps,
 Or else vain-glory, prompted us to draw 635
 Forth from thy native bowers, to show thee here
 With what superior skill we can abuse
 The gifts of Providence, and squander life.
 The dream is past; and thou hast found again
 Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams, 640
 And homestall thatched with leaves. But hast thou found
 Their former charms? And having seen our state,
 Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp
 Of equipage, our gardens, and our sports,
 And heard our music; are thy simple friends, 645
 Thy simple fare, and all thy plain delights
 As dear to thee as once? And have thy joys
 Lost nothing by comparison with ours?
 Rude as thou art (for we returned thee rude
 And ignorant, except of outward show) 650
 I cannot think thee yet so dull of heart
 And spiritless, as never to regret
 Sweets tasted here, and left as soon as known.
 Methinks I see thee straying on the beach,
 And asking of the surge that bathes thy foot, 655

If ever it has washed our distant shore.
 I see thee weep, and thine are honest tears,
 A patriot's for his country: thou art sad
 At thought of her forlorn and abject state,
 From which no power of thine can raise her up. 660

Thus Fancy paints thee, and though apt to err,
 Perhaps errs little when she paints thee thus.
 She tells me, too, that duly every morn
 Thou climbest the mountain top, with eager eye
 Exploring far and wide the watery waste 665

For sight of ship from England. Every speck
 Seen in the dim horizon, turns thee pale
 With conflict of contending hopes and fears.
 But comes at last the dull and dusky eve,
 And sends thee to thy cabin, well prepared 670

To dream all night of what the day denied.
 Alas! expect it not. We found no bait
 To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,
 Disinterested good, is not our trade.
 We travel far, 'tis true, but not for naught; 675

And must be bribed to compass earth again
 By other hopes and richer fruits than yours.

But though true worth and virtue, in the mild
 And genial soil of cultivated life
 Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there,
 Yet not in cities oft: in proud, and gay,
 And gain-devoted cities. Thither flow, 680

As to a common and most noisome sewer,
 The dregs and feculence of every land.
 In cities foul example on most minds
 Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds, 685

In gross and pampered cities, sloth, and lust,
 And wantonness, and gluttonous excess.
 In cities, vice is hidden with most ease,
 Or seen with least reproach; and virtue, taught
 By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there 690

Beyond the achievement of successful flight.
 I do confess them nurseries of the arts,

In which they flourish most; where, in the beams
 Of warm encouragement, and in the eye
 Of public note, they reach their perfect size.
 Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaimed
 The fairest capital of all the world,
 By riot and incontinence the worst.

695

There touched by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes
 A lucid mirror, in which Nature sees
 All her reflected features. Bacon there
 Gives more than female beauty to a stone,
 And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.

700

Nor does the chisel occupy alone
 The powers of sculpture, but the style as much;
 Each province of her art her equal care.

705

With nice incision of her guided steel
 She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a soil
 So sterile with what charms soe'er she will,
 The richest scenery and the loveliest forms.
 Where finds Philosophy her eagle eye,
 With which she gazes at yon burning disk
 Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots?

710

In London. Where her implements exact,
 With which she calculates, computes, and scans
 All distance, motion, magnitude, and now
 Measures an atom, and now girds a world?

715

In London. Where has commerce such a mart,
 So rich, so thronged, so drained, and so supplied,
 As London, opulent, enlarged, and still
 Increasing London? Babylon of old
 Not more the glory of the earth than she,
 A more accomplished world's chief glory now.

720

She has her praise. Now mark a spot or two,
 That so much beauty would do well to purge;
 And show this queen of cities, that so fair
 May yet be foul; so witty, yet not wise.
 It is not seemly, nor of good report,
 That she is slack in discipline; more prompt
 To avenge than to prevent the breach of law;

725

730

That she is rigid in denouncing death
 On petty robbers, and indulges life
 And liberty, and oft-times honour too,
 To peculators of the public gold; 735

That thieves at home must hang, but he that puts
 Into his overgorged and bloated purse
 The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes.
 Nor is it well, nor can it come to good,
 That, through profane and infidel contempt 740

Of holy writ, she has presumed to annul
 And abrogate, as roundly as she may,
 The total ordinance and will of God ;
 Advancing Fashion to the post of Truth,
 And centering all authority in modes 745

And customs of her own, till sabbath-rites
 Have dwindled into unrespected forms,
 And knees and hassocks are well nigh divorced.
 (God made the country, and man made the town.)

What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts 750

That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
 That life holds out to all, should most abound
 And least be threatened in the fields and groves ?

Possess ye, therefore, ye who, borne about
 In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue 755

But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
 But such as Art contrives, possess ye still
 Your element ; there only ye can shine,
 There only minds like yours can do no harm.

Our groves were planted to console at noon
 The pensive wanderer in their shades. At eve 760

The moonbeam, sliding softly in between
 The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,
 Birds warbling all the music. We can spare
 The splendour of your lamps ; they but eclipse

Our softer satellite. Your songs confound 765

Our more harmonious notes : the thrush departs
 Scared, and the offended nightingale is mute.
 There is a public mischief in your mirth ;

It plagues your country. Folly such as yours
Graced with a sword, and worthier of a fan,
Has made, what enemies could ne'er have done,
Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,
A mutilated structure, soon to fall.

BOOK II.

THE TIME-PIECE.

ARGUMENT:—Reflections suggested by the conclusion of the former Book, 1—Peace among the nations recommended on the ground of their common fellowship in sorrow, 48—Prodigies enumerated, 53—Sicilian earthquakes, 75—Man rendered obnoxious to these calamities by sin, 133—God the agent in them, 161—The philosophy that stops at secondary causes reproved, 174—Our own late miscarriages accounted for, 206—Satirical notice taken of our trips to Fontainbleau, 255—But the pulpit, not satire, the proper engine of reformation, 285—The reverend advertiser of engraved sermons, 351—Petit-maître parson, 372—The good preacher, 395—Picture of a theatrical clerical coxcomb, 414—Story-tellers and jesters in the pulpit reproved, 463—Apostrophe to popular applause, 481—Retailers of ancient philosophy expostulated with, 499—Sum of the whole matter, 531—Effects of sacerdotal mismanagement on the laity, 545—Their folly and extravagance, 574—The mischiefs of profusion, 667—Profusion itself, with all its consequent evils, ascribed, as to its principal cause, to the want of discipline in the Universities, 699.

OH for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me more! My ear is pained,
My soul is sick, with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is filled.
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
It does not feel for man. The natural bond
Of brotherhood is severed as the flax

5

10

That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
 He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
 Not coloured like his own, and having power
 To enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
 Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.

15

Lands intersected by a narrow frith
 Abhor each other. Mountains interposed
 Make enemies of nations who had else
 Like kindred drops been mingled into one.
 Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys;

20

And worse than all, and most to be deplored,
 As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,
 Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
 With stripes, that Mercy, with a bleeding heart,
 Weeps when she sees inflicted on a beast.

25

Then what is man? And what man, seeing this
 And having human feelings, does not blush,
 And hang his head, to think himself a man?

I would not have a slave to till my ground,
 To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,

30

And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
 That sinews bought and sold have ever earned.

No: dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
 Just estimation prized above all price,
 I had much rather be myself the slave,

35

And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.

We have no slaves at home:—Then why abroad?

And they themselves once ferried o'er the wave
 That parts us, are emancipate and loosed.

Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
 Receive our air, that moment they are free;
 They touch our country, and their shackles fall.

40

That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
 And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
 And let it circulate through every vein
 Of all your empire; that where Britain's power
 Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.

45

Sure there is need of social intercourse,

Benevolence, and peace, and mutual aid,
 Between the nations, in a world that seems 50
 To toll the deathbell of its own decease,
 And by the voice of all its elements
 To preach the general doom. When were the winds
 Let slip with such a warrant to destroy?
 When did the waves so haughtily o'erleap 55
 Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry?
 Fires from beneath, and meteors from above
 Portentous, unexampled, unexplained,
 Have kindled beacons in the skies, and the old
 And crazy earth has had her shaking fits 60
 More frequent, and foregone her usual rest.
 Is it a time to wrangle, when the props
 And pillars of our planet seem to fail,
 And Nature, with a dim and sickly eye,
 To wait the close of all? But grant her end 65
 More distant, and that prophecy demands
 A longer respite, unaccomplished yet;
 Still they are frowning signals, and bespeak
 Displeasure in his breast who smites the earth
 Or heals it, makes it languish or rejoice. 70
 And 'tis but seemly, that where all deserve
 And stand exposed by common peccancy
 To what no few have felt, there should be peace,
 And brethren in calamity should love.
 Alas for Sicily! rude fragments now 75
 Lie scattered where the shapely column stood.
 Her palaces are dust. In all her streets
 The voice of singing and the sprightly chord
 Are silent. Revelry, and dance, and show,
 Suffer a syncope and solemn pause, 80
 While God performs, upon the trembling stage
 Of his own works, his dreadful part alone.
 How does the earth receive him?—with what signs
 Of gratulation and delight, her King?
 Pours she not all her choicest fruits abroad, 85
 Her sweetest flowers, her aromatic gums,

Disclosing Paradise where'er he treads?—

She quakes at his approach. Her hollow womb,
Conceiving thunders, through a thousand deeps
And fiery caverns, roars beneath his foot.

90

The hills move lightly, and the mountains smoke,
For He has touched them. From the extremest point
Of elevation down into the abyss,
His wrath is busy, and his frown is felt.

The rocks fall headlong, and the valleys rise,

95

The rivers die into offensive pools,
And, charged with putrid verdure, breathe a gross
And mortal nuisance into all the air.

What solid was, by transformation strange,
Grows fluid; and the fixed and rooted earth,

100

Tormented into billows, heaves and swells,
Or with vortiginous and hideous whirl

Sucks down its prey insatiable. Immense
The tumult and the overthrow, the pangs

And agonies of human and of brute

105

Multitudes, fugitive on every side,

And fugitive in vain. The sylvan scene

Migrates uplifted, and, with all its soil,

Alighting in far distant fields, finds out

A new possessor, and survives the change.

110

Ocean has caught the frenzy, and upwrought

To an enormous and o'erbearing height,

Not by a mighty wind, but by that voice

Which winds and waves obey, invades the shore

Resistless. Never such a sudden flood,

115

Upridged so high, and sent on such a charge,

Possessed an inland scene. Where now the throng,

That pressed the beach, and hasty to depart

Looked to the sea for safety? They are gone,

Gone with the refluent wave into the deep—

120

A prince with half his people! Ancient towers,

And roofs embattled high, the gloomy scenes

Where beauty oft and lettered worth consume

Life in the unproductive shades of death,

Fall prone; the pale inhabitants come forth,
And happy in their unforeseen release
From all the rigours of restraint, enjoy
The terrors of the day that sets them free.

Who then that has thee, would not hold thee fast,
Freedom! whom they that lose thee so regret,
That even a judgment, making way for thee,
Seems, in their eyes, a mercy, for thy sake.

Such evil Sin hath wrought, and such a flame
Kindled in Heaven, that it burns down to earth,
And in the furious inquest that it makes
On God's behalf, lays waste his fairest works.

The very elements, though each be meant
The minister of man, to serve his wants,
Conspire against him. With his breath, he draws
A plague into his blood; and cannot use
Life's necessary means, but he must die.

Storms rise to o'erwhelm him; or if stormy winds
Rise not, the waters of the deep shall rise,
And needing none assistance of the storm,
Shall roll themselves ashore, and reach him there.

The earth shall shake him out of all his holds,
Or make his house his grave: nor so content,
Shall counterfeit the motions of the flood,
And drown him in her dry and dusty gulfs.

What then? Were they the wicked above all,
And we the righteous, whose fast-anchored isle
Moved not, while theirs was rocked like a light skiff,
The sport of every wave? No: none are clear,
And none than we more guilty. But where all
Stand chargeable with guilt, and to the shafts

Of wrath obnoxious, God may choose his mark;
May punish, if he please, the less, to warn
The more malignant. If he spared not them,
Tremble and be amazed at thine escape,
Far guiltier England! lest he spare not thee.

Happy the man who sees a God employed
In all the good and ill that chequer life!

Resolving all events, with their effects
And manifold results, into the will
And arbitration wise of the Supreme.

165

Did not his eye rule all things, and intend
The least of our concerns, (since from the least
The greatest oft originate) could Chance
Find place in his dominion, or dispose
One lawless particle to thwart his plan,
Then God might be surprised, and unforeseen
Contingence might alarm him, and disturb
The smooth and equal course of his affairs.

170

This truth, Philosophy, though eagle-eyed
In Nature's tendencies, oft overlooks;
And having found his instrument, forgets
Or disregards, or more presumptuous still,
Denies the power that wields it. God proclaims
His hot displeasure against foolish men
That live an atheist life; involves the Heaven
In tempests; quits his grasp upon the winds,
And gives them all their fury; bids a plague
Kindle a fiery boil upon the skin,
And putrify the breath of blooming Health.

180

He calls for Famine, and the meagre fiend
Blows mildew from between his shrivelled lips,
And taints the golden ear. He springs his mines,
And desolates a nation at a blast.

185

Forth steps the spruce philosopher, and tells
Of homogeneal and discordant springs
And principles; of causes, how they work
By necessary laws their sure effects;
Of action and reaction. He has found
The source of the disease that Nature feels,
And bids the world take heart and banish fear.

190

Thou fool! Will thy discovery of the cause
Suspend the effect, or heal it? Has not God
Still wrought by means since first He made the world?
And did He not of old employ his means
To drown it? What is his creation less

195

200

Than a capacious reservoir of means
 Formed for his use, and ready at his will ?
 Go, dress thine eye with eyesalve ; ask of him,
 Or ask of whomsoever he has taught,
 And learn, though late, the genuine cause of all. 205

England, with all thy faults, I love thee still,
 My country ! and while yet a nook is left
 Where English minds and manners may be found,
 Shall be constrained to love thee. Though thy clime
 Be fickle, and thy year, most part, deformed 210
 With dripping rains, or withered by a frost,
 I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies,
 And fields without a flower, for warmer France
 With all her vines ; nor for Ausonia's groves
 Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bowers. 215
 To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime
 Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire
 Upon thy foes, was never meant my task ;
 But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake
 Thy joys and sorrows, with as true a heart 220
 As any thunderer there. And I can feel
 Thy follies too ; and with a just disdain
 Frown at effeminate, whose very looks
 Reflect dishonour on the land I love.
 How, in the name of soldiership and sense, 225
 Should England prosper, when such things, as smooth
 And tender as a girl, all essenced o'er
 With odours, and as profligate as sweet ;
 Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,
 And love when they should fight ; when such as these 230
 Presume to lay their hand upon the ark
 Of her magnificent and awful cause ?
 Time was, when it was praise and boast enough
 In every clime, and travel where we might,
 That we were born her children. Praise enough 235
 To fill the ambition of a private man,
 That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,
 And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.

Farewell those honours, and farewell with them
 The hope of such hereafter! They have fallen,
 Each in his field of glory; one in arms,
 And one in council. Wolfe, upon the lap
 Of smiling Victory that moment won,
 And Chatham, heart-sick of his country's shame.
 They made us many soldiers. Chatham, still
 Consulting England's happiness at home,
 Secured it by an unforgiving frown,
 If any wronged her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,
 Put so much of his heart into his act,
 That his example had a magnet's force,
 And all were swift to follow whom all loved.
 Those suns are set. Oh, rise some other such!
 Or all that we have left, is empty talk
 Of old achievements, and despair of new.

Now hoist the sail, and let the streamers float

255

Upon the wanton breezes. Strew the deck

With lavender, and sprinkle liquid sweets,

That no rude savour maritime invade

The nose of nice nobility. Breathe soft,

Ye clarionets, and softer still, ye flutes,

260

That winds and waters, lulled by magic sounds,

May bear us smoothly to the Gallic shore.

True, we have lost an empire—let it pass.

True, we may thank the perfidy of France,

265

That picked the jewel out of England's crown,

With all the cunning of an envious shrew.

And let that pass—'twas but a trick of state.

A brave man knows no malice, but at once

Forgets in peace the injuries of war,

And gives his direst foe a friend's embrace.

270

And shamed as we have been, to the very beard

Braved and defied, and in our own sea proved

Too weak for those decisive blows that once

Ensured us mastery there, we yet retain

Some small preeminence; we justly boast

275

At least superior jockeyship, and claim

The honours of the turf as all our own.
 Go then, well worthy of the praise ye seek,
 And show the shame ye might conceal at home,
 In foreign eyes!—be grooms, and win the plate,
 Where once your noble fathers won a crown! 280

'Tis generous to communicate your skill
 To those that need it. Folly is soon learned,
 And under such preceptors, who can fail?

There is a pleasure in poetic pains 285
 Which only poets know. The shifts and turns,
 The expedients and inventions multiform,
 To which the mind resorts, in chase of terms
 Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win—
 To arrest the fleeting images that fill
 The mirror of the mind, and hold them fast,
 And force them sit, till he has pencilled off
 A faithful likeness of the forms he views;
 Then to dispose his copies with such art
 That each may find its most propitious light,
 And shine by situation, hardly less 295
 Than by the labour and the skill it cost;
 Are occupations of the poet's mind
 So pleasing, and that steal away the thought
 With such address from themes of sad import,
 That lost in his own musings, happy man! 300

He feels the anxieties of life, denied
 Their wonted entertainment, all retire.
 Such joys has he that sings. But ah! not such,
 Or seldom such, the hearers of his song. 305

Fastidious, or else listless, or perhaps
 Aware of nothing arduous in a task
 They never undertook, they little note
 His dangers or escapes, and haply find
 Their least amusement where he found the most. 310

But is amusement all? Studious of song,
 And yet ambitious not to sing in vain,
 I would not trifle merely, though the world
 Be loudest in their praise who do no more.

Yet what can satire, whether grave or gay?

315

It may correct a foible, may chastise

The freaks of fashion, regulate the dress,

Retrench a swordblade, or displace a patch;

But where are its sublimer trophies found?

What vice has it subdued? whose heart reclaimed

320

By rigour? or whom laughed into reform?

Alas! Leviathan is not so tamed;

Laughed at, he laughs again; and stricken hard,

Turns to the stroke his adamantine scales,

That fear no discipline of human hands.

325

The pulpit, therefore, (and I name it filled

With solemn awe, that bids me well beware

With what intent I touch that holy thing)

The pulpit (when the satirist has at last,

Strutting and vapouring in an empty school,

330

Spent all his force, and made no proselyte)

I say the pulpit (in the sober use

Of its legitimate, peculiar powers)

Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,

335

The most important and effectual guard,

Support, and ornament of Virtue's cause.

There stands the messenger of truth; there stands

The legate of the skies!—His theme divine,

His office sacred, his credentials clear.

By him, the violated law speaks out

340

Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet

As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.

He establishes the strong, restores the weak,

Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,

And armed himself in panoply complete

345

Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms

Bright as his own, and trains by every rule

Of holy discipline, to glorious war,

The sacramental host of God's elect.

Are all such teachers? Would to Heaven all were!

350

But hark—the Doctor's voice!—fast wedged between

Two empirics he stands, and with swoln cheeks

Inspires the News, his trumpet. Keener far
 Than all invective is his bold harangue,
 While, through that public organ of report,
 He hails the clergy, and defying shame,
 Announces to the world his own and theirs. 355

He teaches those to read, whom schools dismissed,
 And colleges, untaught; sells accent, tone,
 And emphasis in score, and gives to prayer
 The *adagio* and *andante* it demands. 360

He grinds divinity of other days
 Down into modern use; transforms old print
 To zigzag manuscript, and cheats the eyes
 Of gallery critics by a thousand arts. 365

Are there who purchase of the Doctor's ware?
 Oh name it not in Gath! it cannot be,
 That grave and learned clerks should need such aid.
 He doubtless is in sport, and does but droll,
 Assuming thus a rank unknown before— 370

Grand caterer and dry nurse of the church!
 I venerate the man whose heart is warm,
 Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life
 Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
 That he is honest in the sacred cause. 375

To such I render more than mere respect,
 Whose actions say that they respect themselves.
 But loose in morals, and in manners vain,
 In conversation frivolous, in dress
 Extreme, at once rapacious and profuse; 380

Frequent in Park with lady at his side,
 Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes;
 But rare at home, and never at his books,
 Or with his pen, save when he scrawls a card;
 Constant at routs, familiar with a round 385

Of ladyships, a stranger to the poor;
 Ambitious of preferment for its gold,
 And well prepared, by ignorance and sloth,
 By infidelity and love o' the world,
 To make God's work a sinecure; a slave 390

To his own pleasures and his patron's pride :—
 From such apostles, O ye mitred heads
 Preserve the church ! and lay not careless hands
 On skulls that cannot teach, and will not learn.

Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,
 Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,
 Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
 His master-strokes, and draw from his design.
 I would express him simple, grave, sincere ;
 In doctrine uncorrupt ; in language plain,
 And plain in manner ; decent, solemn, chaste
 And natural in gesture ; much impressed
 Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
 And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
 May feel it too ; affectionate in look,
 And tender in address, as well becomes
 A messenger of grace to guilty men.

Behold the picture !—Is it like ?—Like whom ?
 The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,
 And then skip down again ; pronounce a text ;
 Cry—hem ! and reading what they never wrote
 Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,
 And with a well-bred whisper close the scene !

In man or woman, but far most in man,
 And most of all in man that ministers
 And serves the altar, in my soul I loathe
 All affectation. 'Tis my perfect scorn ;
 Object of my implacable disgust.
 What !—will a man play tricks, will he indulge
 A silly fond conceit of his fair form
 And just proportion, fashionable mien
 And pretty face, in presence of his God ?
 Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,
 As with the diamond on his lily hand,
 And play his brilliant parts before my eyes,
 When I am hungry for the bread of life ?
 He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and shames
 His noble office, and, instead of truth,

395

400

405

410

415

420

425

Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock !
 Therefore avaunt all attitude, and stare, 430
 And start theatic, practised at the glass !
 I seek divine simplicity in him
 Who handles things divine ; and all beside,
 Though learned with labour, and though much admired
 By curious eyes and judgments ill informed 435
 To me is odious as the nasal twang
 Heard at conventicle, where worthy men,
 Misled by custom, strain celestial themes
 Through the pressed nostril, spectacle-bestrid.

Some, decent in demeanour while they preach,
 That task performed, relapse into themselves,
 And having spoken wisely, at the close
 Grow wanton, and give proof to every eye,
 Whoe'er was edified, themselves were not !

Forth comes the pocket mirror.—First we stroke 445
 An eyebrow, next compose a straggling lock,
 Then, with an air most gracefully performed,
 Fall back into our seat, extend an arm,
 And lay it at its ease with gentle care,
 With handkerchief in hand depending low :
 The better hand, more busy, gives the nose
 Its bergamot, or aids the indebted eye
 With opera glass to watch the moving scene,
 And recognise the slow retiring fair.—

Now this is fulsome ; and offends me more 455
 Than in a churchman slovenly neglect
 And rustic coarseness would. A heavenly mind
 May be indifferent to her house of clay,
 And slight the hovel as beneath her care ;
 But how a body so fantastic, trim, 460
 And quaint in its deportment and attire,
 Can lodge a heavenly mind—demands a doubt.

He that negotiates between God and man,
 As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
 Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
 Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful 465

To court a grin, when you should woo a soul;
 To break a jest, when pity would inspire
 Pathetic exhortation; and to address
 The skittish fancy with facetious tales,
 When sent with God's commission to the heart.

470

So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip
 Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,

And I consent you take it for your text,
 Your only one, till sides and benches fail.

475

No: he was serious in a serious cause,
 And understood too well the weighty terms
 That he had ta'en in charge. He would not stoop
 To conquer those by jocular exploits,
 Whom Truth and Soborness assailed in vain.

480

O Popular Applause! what heart of man
 Is proof against thy sweet seducing charms?
 The wisest and the best feel urgent need
 Of all their caution in thy gentlest gales;
 But swelled into a gust—who then, alas!

485

With all his canvas set, and inexpert,
 And therefore heedless, can withstand thy power?
 Praise from the rivelled lips of toothless, bald
 Decrepitude, and in the looks of lean
 And craving Poverty, and in the bow
 Respectful of the smutched artificer,
 Is oft too welcome, and may much disturb
 The bias of the purpose. How much more,
 Poured forth by Beauty splendid and polite,
 In language soft as Adoration breathes!

490

Ah spare your idol! think him human still;
 Charms he may have, but he has frailties too;
 Dote not too much, nor spoil what ye admire.

495

All truth is from the sempiternal source
 Of Light Divine. But Egypt, Greece, and Rome
 Drew from the stream below. More favoured, we
 Drink, when we choose it, at the fountain head.
 To them it flowed much mingled and defiled
 With hurtful error, prejudice, and dreams

500

Illusive of philosophy, so called, 505
 But falsely. Sages after sages strove
 In vain to filter off a crystal draught
 Pure from the lees, which often more enhanced
 The thirst than slaked it, and not seldom bred
 Intoxication and delirium wild. 510
 In vain they pushed inquiry to the birth
 And spring-time of the world; asked, Whence is man?
 Why formed at all? And wherefore as he is?
 Where must he find his Maker? With what rites
 Adore him? Will he hear, accept, and bless? 515
 Or does he sit regardless of his works?
 Has man within him an immortal seed?
 Or does the tomb take all? If he survive
 His ashes, where, and in what weal or woe?
 Knots worthy of solution, which alone 520
 A Deity could solve. Their answers, vague
 And all at random, fabulous and dark,
 Left them as dark themselves. Their rules of life,
 Defective and unsanctioned, proved too weak
 To bind the roving appetite, and lead 525
 Blind nature to a God not yet revealed.
 'Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts,
 Explains all mysteries, except her own,
 And so illuminates the path of life,
 That fools discover it, and stray no more. 530
 Now tell me, dignified and sapient sir,
 My man of morals, nurtured in the shades
 Of Academus, is this false or true?
 Is Christ the abler teacher, or the schools?
 If Christ, then why resort at every turn 535
 To Athens or to Rome, for wisdom short
 Of man's occasions, when in him reside
 Grace, knowledge, comfort—an unfathomed store?
 How oft, when Paul has served us with a text,
 Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully, preached! 540
 Men that, if now alive, would sit content
 And humble learners of a Saviour's worth,

Preach it who might. Such was their love of truth,
Their thirst of knowledge, and their candour too!

And thus it is. (The pastor, either vain
By nature, or by flattery made so, taught
To gaze at his own splendour, and to exalt
Absurdly, not his office, but himself;
Or unenlightened, and too proud to learn;
Or vicious, and not therefore apt to teach;
Perverting often, by the stress of lewd
And loose example, whom he should instruct;
Expose, and holds up to broad disgrace,
The noblest function, and discredits much
The brightest truths that man has ever seen.)

545

For ghostly counsel, if it either fall
Below the exigence, or be not backed
With show of love, at least with hopeful proof
Of some sincerity, on the giver's part;
Or be dishonoured, in the exterior form
And mode of its conveyance, by such tricks
As move derision, or by foppish airs
And histrionic mummery, that let down
The pulpit to the level of the stage,
Drops from the lips a disregarded thing.

555

The weak perhaps are moved, but are not taught,
While prejudice in men of stronger minds
Takes deeper root, confirmed by what they see.

A relaxation of Religion's hold

Upon the roving and untutored heart

560

Soon follows, and the curb of conscience snapped,
The laity run wild.—But do they now?

Note their extravagance, and be convinced.

As nations ignorant of God contrive

A wooden one, so we, no longer taught

575

By monitors that mother church supplies,

Now make our own. Posterity will ask

(If e'er posterity see verse of mine)

Some fifty or a hundred lustrums hence,

What was a Monitor in George's days?

580

My very gentle reader yet unborn,
 Of whom I needs must augur better things,
 Since Heaven would sure grow weary of a world
 Productive only of a race like us,
 A Monitor is wood—plank shaven thin. 585

We wear it at our backs. There, closely braced
 And neatly fitted, it compresses hard
 The prominent and most unsightly bones,
 And binds the shoulders flat. We prove its use
 Sovereign, and most effectual, to secure 590

A form not now gymnastic as of yore,
 From rickets and distortion, else our lot.
 But thus admonished, we can walk erect—
 One proof at least of manhood! while the friend
 Sticks close, a Mentor worthy of his charge. 595

Our habits, costlier than Lucullus wore,
 And by caprice as multiplied as his,
 Just please us while the passion is at full,
 But change with every moon. The sycophant
 That waits to dress us, arbitrates their date; 600

Surveys his fair reversion with keen eye;
 Finds one ill made, another obsolete;
 This fits not nicely, that is ill conceived;
 And making prize of all that he condemns,
 With our expenditure defrays his own. 605

Variety's the very spice of life,) 610
 That gives it all its flavour. We have run
 Through every change that Fancy, at the loom
 Exhausted, has had genius to supply;
 And studious of mutation still, discard

A real elegance, a little used,
 For monstrous novelty and strange disguise.
 We sacrifice to dress, till household joys
 And comforts cease. Dress drains our cellar dry,
 And keeps our larder lean; puts out our fires, 615

And introduces hunger, frost, and woe,
 Where peace and hospitality might reign.
 What man that lives, and that knows how to live,

Would fail to exhibit at the public shows
 A form as splendid as the proudest there,
 Though Appetite raise outcries at the cost?
 A man o' the town dines late, but soon enough,
 With reasonable forecast and dispatch,
 To insure a side-box station at half price.
 You think, perhaps, so delicate his dress,
 His daily fare as delicate. Alas!

620

He picks clean teeth, and, busy as he seems
 With an old tavern quill, is hungry yet.
 The Rout is Folly's circle, which she draws
 With magic wand. So potent is the spell,
 That none, decoyed into that fatal ring,
 Unless by Heaven's peculiar grace, escape.
 There we grow early grey, but never wise;
 There form connexions, but acquire no friend;
 Solicit pleasure, hopeless of success;

625

Waste youth in occupations only fit
 For second childhood; and devote old age
 To sports which only childhood could excuse.
 There they are happiest who dissemble best
 Their weariness; and they the most polite
 Who squander time and treasure with a smile,
 Though at their own destruction. She that asks
 Her dear five hundred friends, contemns them all,
 And hates their coming. They (what can they less?)

630

Make just reprisals, and with cringe and shrug,
 And bow obsequious, hide their hate of her.

645

All catch the frenzy, downward from her Grace,
 Whose flambeaux flash against the morning skies,
 And gild our chamber ceilings as they pass,
 To her who, frugal only that her thrift

650

May feed excesses she can ill afford,
 Is hackneyed home unlackeyed; who, in haste
 Alighting, turns the key in her own door,
 And, at the watchman's lantern borrowing light,

655

Finds a cold bed her only comfort left.

Wives beggar husbands, husbands starve their wives,

On Fortune's velvet altar offering up
 Their last poor pittance—Fortune, most severe
 Of goddesses yet known, and costlier far
 Than all that held their routs in Juno's heaven! 660

(So fare we in this prison-house, the world;) And 'tis a fearful spectacle to see
 So many maniacs dancing in their chains.
 They gaze upon the links that hold them fast,
 With eyes of anguish, execrate their lot,
 Then shake them in despair, and dance again. 665

Now basket up the family of plagues
 That waste our vitals; peculation, sale
 Of honour, perjury, corruption, frauds
 By forgery, by subterfuge of law,
 By tricks and lies as numerous and as keen 670

As the necessities their authors feel;
 Then cast them, closely bundled, every brat
 At the right door. Profusion is the sire.
 Profusion unrestrained, with all that's base
 In character has littered all the land, 675

And bred, within the memory of no few,
 A priesthood such as Baal's was of old,
 A people such as never was till now.
 It is a hungry vice;—it eats up all
 That gives society its beauty, strength, 680

Convenience, and security, and use;
 Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapped
 And gibbeted, as fast as catchpole-claws
 Can seize the slippery prey, unties the knot
 Of union, and converts the sacred band 685

That holds mankind together, to a scourge.
 Profusion, deluging a state with lusts
 Of grossest nature and of worst effects,
 Prepares it for its ruin; hardens, blinds,
 And warps the consciences of public men, 690

Till they can laugh at virtue, mock the fools
 That trust them, and in the end disclose a face
 That would have shocked Credulity herself,

Unmasked, vouchsafing this their sole excuse—
 Since all alike are selfish, why not they?
 This does Profusion, and the accursed cause
 Of such deep mischief has itself a cause.

695

In colleges and halls, in ancient days,
 When learning, virtue, piety, and truth
 Were precious, and inculcated with care,
 There dwelt a sage called Discipline. His head,
 Not yet by time completely silvered o'er,
 Bespoke him past the bounds of freakish youth,
 But strong for service still, and unimpaired.

700

His eye was meek and gentle, and a smile
 Played on his lips, and in his speech was heard
 Paternal sweetness, dignity, and love.

705

The occupation dearest to his heart
 Was to encourage goodness. He would stroke
 The head of modest and ingenuous worth
 That blushed at its own praise; and press the youth
 Close to his side that pleased him. Learning grew
 Beneath his care, a thriving vigorous plant;
 The mind was well-informed, the passions held
 Subordinate, and diligence was choice.

710

If e'er it chanced, as sometimes chance it must,
 That one among so many overleaped
 The limits of control, his gentle eye
 Grew stern, and darted a severe rebuke;
 His frown was full of terror, and his voice
 Shook the delinquent with such fits of awe
 As left him not, till penitence had won
 Lost favour back again, and closed the breach.

715

(But Discipline, a faithful servant long,
 Declined at length into the vale of years;
 A palsy struck his arm, his sparkling eye
 Was quenched in rheums of age, his voice, unstrung,
 Grew tremulous, and moved derision more
 Than reverence, in perverse rebellious youth.
 So colleges and halls neglected much
 Their good old friend, and Discipline at length.

720

725

730

O'erlooked and unemployed, fell sick, and died.
 Then Study languished, Emulation slept,
 And Virtue fled. (The schools became a scene 735
 Of solemn farce, where Ignorance in stilts,
 His cap well-lined with logic not his own,
 With parrot tongue performed the scholar's part,
 Proceeding soon a graduated dunce.)
 Then compromise had place, and scrutiny 740
 Became stone blind; precedence went in truck,
 And he was competent whose purse was so.
 A dissolution of all bonds ensued;
 The curbs invented for the mulish mouth
 Of headstrong youth were broken; bars and bolts 745
 Grew rusty by disuse; and massy gates
 Forgot their office, opening with a touch;
 Till gowns at length are found mere masquerade,
 The tasseled cap and the spruce band a jest,
 A mockery of the world! What need of these 750
 For gamesters, jockeys, brothellers impure,
 Spendthrifts, and booted sportsmen, oftener seen
 With belted waist and pointers at their heels
 Than in the bounds of duty? What was learned,
 If aught was learned in childhood, is forgot; 755
 And such expense as pinches parents blue,
 And mortifies the liberal hand of love,
 Is squandered in pursuit of idle sports
 And vicious pleasures; buys the boy a name
 That sits a stigma on his father's house, 760
 And cleaves through life inseparably close
 To him that wears it. What can after-games
 Of riper joys, and commerce with the world,
 The lewd vain world that must receive him soon,
 Add to such erudition, thus acquired 765
 Where science and where virtue are professed?
 They may confirm his habits, rivet fast
 His folly, but to spoil him is a task
 That bids defiance to the united powers
 Of fashion, dissipation, taverns, stews. 770

Now blame we most the nurslings, or the nurse ?
 The children, crooked, and twisted, and deformed
 Through want of care; or her whose winking eye
 And slumbering oscitancy mars the brood ?

The nurse, no doubt. Regardless of her charge,
 She needs herself correction; needs to learn
 That it is dangerous sporting with the world,
 With things so sacred as a nation's trust,
 The nurture of her youth, her dearest pledge.

All are not such. I had a brother once—

Peace to the memory of a man of worth,
 A man of letters, and of manners too !
 Of manners sweet as Virtue always wears,
 When gay Goodnature dresses her in smiles.

He graced a college, in which order yet
 Was sacred, and was honoured, loved, and wept
 By more than one, themselves conspicuous there.
 Some minds are tempered happily, and mixed
 With such ingredients of good sense and taste
 Of what is excellent in man, they thirst
 With such a zeal to be what they approve,
 That no restraints can circumscribe them more
 Than they themselves by choice, for wisdom's sake.
 Nor can example hurt them: what they see
 Of vice in others but enhancing more

The charms of virtue in their just esteem.
 If such escape contagion, and emerge
 Pure, from so foul a pool, to shine abroad,
 And give the world their talents and themselves,
 Small thanks to those whose negligence or sloth
 Exposed their inexperience to the snare,
 And left them to an undirected choice.

See then the quiver broken and decayed,
 In which are kept our arrows ! Rusting there
 In wild disorder, and unfit for use,
 What wonder, if discharged into the world,
 They shame their shooters with a random flight,
 Their points obtuse, and feathers drunk with wine !

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Well may the Church wage unsuccessful war,
With such artillery armed. Vice parries wide
The undreaded volley with a sword of straw,
And stands an impudent and fearless mark. 810

Have we not tracked the felon home, and found
His birth-place and his dam? The country mourns,
Mourns because every plague that can infest
Society, and that saps and worms the base
Of the edifice that policy has raised,
Swarms in all quarters; meets the eye, the ear,
And suffocates the breath at every turn. 815

Profusion breeds them; and the cause itself
Of that calamitous mischief has been found:
Found too where most offensive, in the skirts
Of the robed pedagogue! Else let the arraigned
Stand up unconscious, and refute the charge. 820

So when the Jewish leader stretched his arm,
And waved his rod divine, a race obscene,
Spawned in the muddy beds of Nile, came forth,
Polluting Egypt: gardens, fields, and plains
Were covered with the pest; the streets were filled;
The croaking nuisance lurked in every nook; 825
Nor palaces, nor even chambers, 'scaped;
And the land stank—so numerous was the fry.

BOOK III.

THE GARDEN.

ARGUMENT:—Self-recollection and reproof, 1—Address to domestic happiness, 41—Some account of myself, 108—The vanity of many of their pursuits who are reputed wise, 124—Justification of my censures, 191—Divine illumination necessary to the most expert philosopher, 221—The question, What is truth? answered by other questions, 261—Domestic happiness addressed again, 290—Few lovers of the country, 293—My tame hare, 334—Occupations of a retired gentleman in his garden, 352—Pruning, 408—Framing, 435—Raising the cucumber, 446—Greenhouse, 566—Sowing of flower seeds, 624—The country preferable to the town, even in the winter, 675—Reasons why it is deserted at that season, 728—Ruinous effects of gaming and of expensive improvements, 760—Book concludes with an apostrophe to the metropolis, 811.

As one who long in thickets and in brakes
Entangled, winds now this way and now that
His devious course uncertain, seeking home;
Or having long in miry ways been foiled
And sore discomfited, from slough to slough
Plunging, and half despairing of escape;
If chance at length he find a greensward smooth
And faithful to the foot, his spirits rise,
He cherups brisk his ear-erecting steed,
And winds his way with pleasure and with ease; 5
So I, designing other themes, and called
To adorn the Sofa with eulogium due,
To tell its slumbers, and to paint its dreams,
Have rambled wide. In country, city, seat
Of academic fame (howe'er deserved) 10
Long held, and scarcely disengaged at last. 15

But now with pleasant pace a cleanlier road
 I mean to tread. I feel myself at large,
 Courageous, and refreshed for future toil,
 If toil await me, or if dangers new.

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Since pulpits fail, and sounding-boards reflect
 Most part an empty ineffectual sound,
 What chance that I, to fame so little known,
 Nor conversant with men or manners much,
 Should speak to purpose, or with better hope
 Crack the satiric thong? 'Twere wiser far
 For me, enamoured of sequestered scenes,
 And charmed with rural beauty, to repose
 Where chance may throw me, beneath elm or vine,
 My languid limbs, when summer sears the plains,
 Or when rough winter rages, on the soft
 And sheltered Sofa, while the nitrous air
 Feeds a blue flame, and makes a cheerful hearth;
 There, undisturbed by Folly, and apprised
 How great the danger of disturbing her,
 To muse in silence, or at least confine
 Remarks that gall so many, to the few
 My partners in retreat. Disgust concealed
 Is oft-times proof of wisdom, when the fault
 Is obstinate, and cure beyond our reach.

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Domestic Happiness, thou only bliss
 Of Paradise that has survived the fall!
 Though few now taste thee unimpaired and pure,
 Or tasting long enjoy thee; too infirm,
 Or too incautious, to preserve thy sweets
 Unmixed with drops of bitter, which Neglect
 Or Temper sheds into thy crystal cup.
 Thou art the nurse of Virtue. In thine arms
 She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,
 Heaven-born, and destined to the skies again.
 Thou art not known where Pleasure is adored,
 That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist
 And wandering eyes, still leaning on the arm
 Of Novelty, her fickle, frail support;

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For thou art meek and constant, hating change,
And finding in the calm of truth-tried love
Joys that her stormy raptures never yield.

Forsaking thee, what shipwreck have we made
Of honour, dignity, and fair renown!

Till prostitution elbows us aside

In all our crowded streets; and senates seem
Convened for purposes of empire less
Than to release the adulteress from her bond.

The adulteress! what a theme for angry verse!

What provocation to the indignant heart,
That feels for injured love! but I disdain
The nauseous task to paint her as she is,
Cruel, abandoned, glorying in her shame!

No:—let her pass, and charioted along

In guilty splendour, shake the public ways;
The frequency of crimes has washed them white,
And verse of mine shall never brand the wretch,
Whom matrons now, of character unsmirched

And chaste themselves, are not ashamed to own.

Virtue and vice had boundaries in old time,

Not to be passed: and she that had renounced
Her sex's honour, was renounced herself
By all that prized it; not for prudery's sake,
But dignity's, resentful of the wrong.

'Twas hard perhaps on here and there a waif

Desirous to return, and not received,

But was a wholesome rigour in the main,

And taught the unblemished to preserve with care
That purity, whose loss was loss of all.

Men too were nice in honour in those days,

And judged offenders well. Then he that sharped,
And pocketed a prize by fraud obtained,

Was marked and shunned as odious. He that sold
His country, or was slack when she required

His every nerve in action and at stretch,

Paid with the blood that he had basely spared,
The price of his default. But now—yes, now,

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We are become so candid and so fair,
 So liberal in construction, and so rich
 In Christian charity, (good-natured age!) 95
 That they are safe, sinners of either sex,
 Transgress what laws they may. Well-dressed, well-bred,
 Well-equipaged, is ticket good enough
 To pass us readily through every door.

Hypocrisy, detest her as we may, 100
 (And no man's hatred ever wronged her yet)
 May claim this merit still—that she admits
 The worth of what she mimics with such care,
 And thus gives Virtue indirect applause;
 But she has burned her mask, not needed here, 105
 Where Vice has such allowance, that her shifts
 And specious semblances have lost their use.

I was a stricken deer that left the herd
 Long since: with many an arrow deep infixed
 My panting side was charged, when I withdrew 110
 To seek a tranquil death in distant shades,
 There was I found by One who had himself
 Been hurt by the archers. In his side He bore,
 And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.
 With gentle force soliciting the darts, 115
 He drew them forth, and healed, and bade me live.
 Since then, with few associates, in remote
 And silent woods I wander, far from those
 My former partners of the peopled scene;
 With few associates, and not wishing more. 120
 Here much I ruminant, as much I may,
 With other views of men and manners now
 Than once, and others of a life to come.
 I see that all are wanderers, gone astray
 Each in his own delusions; they are lost 125
 In chase of fancied happiness, still wooed
 And never won. Dream after dream ensues,
 And still they dream that they shall still succeed,
 And still are disappointed. Rings the world
 With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind, 130

And add two-thirds of the remainder-half,
 And find the total of their hopes and fears
 Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay
 As if created only like the fly
 That spreads his motley wings in the eye of noon,
 To sport their season, and be seen no more.

135

The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,
 And pregnant with discoveries new and rare.

Some write a narrative of wars and feats
 Of heroes little known, and call the rant
 A history: describe the man, of whom
 His own coevals took but little note,
 And paint his person, character and views,
 As they had known him from his mother's womb.

140

They disentangle from the puzzled skein,
 In which obscurity has wrapped them up,
 The threads of politic and shrewd design
 That ran through all his purposes, and charge
 His mind with meanings that he never had,
 Or having, kept concealed. Some drill and bore
 The solid earth, and from the strata there
 Extract a register, by which we learn,
 That He who made it, and revealed its date
 To Moses, was mistaken in its age.

145

Some, more acute and more industrious still,
 Contrive creation; travel nature up
 To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,
 And tell us whence the stars; why some are fixed,
 And planetary some; what gave them first
 Rotation; from what fountain flowed their light.

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Great contest follows, and much learnèd dust
 Involves the combatants; each claiming Truth,
 And Truth disclaiming both; and thus they spend
 The little wick of life's poor shallow lamp,
 In playing tricks with Nature, giving laws
 To distant worlds, and trifling in their own.

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Is 't not a pity now, that tickling rheums
 Should ever tease the lungs and blear the sight

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Of oracles like these? Great pity too,
 That having wielded th' elements, and built 170
 A thousand systems, each in his own way,
 They should go out in fume, and be forgot?
 Ah! what is life thus spent? and what are they
 But frantic who thus spend it all for smoke?

Eternity for bubbles proves at last 175
 A senseless bargain. When I see such games
 Played by the creatures of a Power who swears
 That He will judge the earth, and call the fool
 To a sharp reckoning that has lived in vain;
 And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well, 180
 And prove it in the infallible result
 So hollow and so false—I feel my heart
 Dissolve in pity, and account the learn'd,
 If this be learning, most of all deceived.

Great crimes alarm the Conscience, but it sleeps 185
 While thoughtful man is plausibly amused.
 'Defend me therefore, Common Sense,' say I,
 'From reveries so airy, from the toil
 Of dropping buckets into empty wells,
 And growing old in drawing nothing up!' 190

 'Twere well,' says one sage, erudite, profound,
 Terribly arched and aquiline his nose,
 And overbuilt with most impending brows,
 'Twere well, could you permit the world to live 195
 As the world pleases. What's the world to you?
 Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk
 As sweet as charity from human breasts.
 I think, articulate, I laugh and weep,
 And exercise all functions of a man.

How then should I and any man that lives 200
 Be strangers to each other? Pierce my vein,
 Take of the crimson stream meandering there,
 And catechise it well; apply your glass,
 Search it, and prove now if it be not blood
 Congenial with thine own; and if it be, 205
 What edge of subtlety canst thou suppose

Keen enough, wise and skilful as thou art,
 To cut the link of brotherhood, by which
 One common Maker bound me to the kind?
 True, I am no proficient, I confess,
 In arts like yours. I cannot call the swift
 And perilous lightnings from the angry clouds,
 And bid them hide themselves in earth beneath;
 I cannot analyse the air, nor catch
 The parallax of yonder luminous point
 That seems half quenched in the immense abyss;
 Such powers I boast not—neither can I rest
 A silent witness of the headlong rage,
 Or heedless folly, by which thousands die,
 Bone of my bone, and kindred souls to mine.

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God never meant that man should scale the Heavens
 By strides of human wisdom. In his works,
 Though wondrous, He commands us, in his word,
 To seek him rather where his mercy shines.

The mind indeed, enlightened from above,
 Views him in all; ascribes to the grand cause
 The grand effect; acknowledges with joy
 His manner, and with rapture tastes his style.
 But never yet did philosophic tube,
 That brings the planets home into the eye
 Of Observation, and discovers, else

Not visible, his family of worlds,
 Discover him that rules them; such a veil
 Hangs over mortal eyes, blind from the birth,
 And dark in things divine. Full often too
 Our wayward intellect, the more we learn
 Of Nature, overlooks her author more;

From instrumental causes proud to draw
 Conclusion retrograde, and mad mistake.
 But if his word once teach us, shoot a ray
 Through all the heart's dark chambers, and reveal
 Truths undiscerned but by that holy light,
 Then all is plain. Philosophy baptized
 In the pure fountain of eternal love

Has eyes indeed; and viewing all she sees 245
 As meant to indicate a God to man,
 Gives him his praise, and forfeits not her own.
 Learning has borne such fruit in other days
 On all her branches. Piety has found
 Friends in the friends of science, and true prayer 250
 Has flowed from lips wet with Castalian dews.
 Such was thy wisdom, Newton, childlike sage!
 Sagacious reader of the works of God,
 And in his word sagacious. Such too thine, 255
 Milton, whose genius had angelic wings,
 And fed on manna. And such thine, in whom
 Our British Themis gloried with just cause,
 Immortal Hale! for deep discernment praised,
 And sound integrity, not more than famed
 For sanctity of manners undefiled. 260

All flesh is grass, and all its glory fades
 Like the fair flower dishevelled in the wind;
 Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream.
 The man we celebrate must find a tomb, 265
 And we that worship him, ignoble graves.
 Nothing is proof against the general curse
 Of vanity, that seizes all below.
 The only amaranthine flower on earth
 Is virtue; the only lasting treasure, truth.
 But what is truth? 'Twas Pilate's question put 270
 To Truth itself, that deigned him no reply.
 And wherefore? Will not God impart his light
 To them that ask it?—Freely.—'Tis his joy,
 His glory, and his nature to impart;
 But to the proud, uncandid, insincere, 275
 Or negligent inquirer, not a spark.
 What's that which brings contempt upon a book,
 And him that writes it, though the style be neat,
 The method clear, and argument exact?
 That makes a minister in holy things 280
 The joy of many, and the dread of more,
 His name a theme for praise and for reproach?

That, while it gives us worth in God's account,
Depreciates and undoes us in our own?

What pearl is it that rich men cannot buy,
That learning is too proud to gather up,
But which the poor, and the despised of all,
Seek and obtain, and often find unsought?
Tell me—and I will tell thee what is Truth.

Oh friendly to the best pursuits of man,
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,
Domestic life in rural leisure passed!
Few know thy value, and few taste thy sweets,
Though many boast thy favours, and affect
To understand and choose thee for their own.
But foolish man foregoes his proper bliss,
Even as his first progenitor, and quits,
Though placed in Paradise, (for earth has still
Some traces of her youthful beauty left)
Substantial happiness for transient joy.

Scenes formed for contemplation, and to nurse
The growing seeds of wisdom; that suggest,
By every pleasing image they present,
Reflections such as meliorate the heart,
Compose the passions, and exalt the mind;
Scenes such as these, 'tis his supreme delight
To fill with riot, and defile with blood.
Should some contagion, kind to the poor brutes
We persecute, annihilate the tribes

That draw the sportsman over hill and dale
Fearless, and rapt away from all his cares;
Should never game-fowl hatch her eggs again,
Nor baited hook deceive the fish's eye;
Could pageantry and dance, and feast and song,
Be quelled in all our summer-month retreats;
How many self-deluded nymphs and swains,
Who dream they have a taste for fields and groves,
Would find them hideous nurseries of the spleen,
And crowd the roads, impatient for the town!
They love the country, and none else, who seek

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For their own sake its silence and its shade;
 Delights which who would leave, that has a heart
 Susceptible of pity, or a mind
 Cultured and capable of sober thought
 For all the savage din of the swift pack, 325
 And clamours of the field? Detested sport,
 That owes its pleasures to another's pain,
 That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks
 Of harmless Nature, dumb, but yet endued
 With eloquence that agonies inspire, 330
 Of silent tears and heart-distending sighs!
 Vain tears, alas! and sighs that never find
 A corresponding tone in jovial souls.
 Well—one at least is safe. One sheltered hare
 Has never heard the sanguinary yell 335
 Of cruel man, exulting in her woes.
 Innocent partner of my peaceful home,
 Whom ten long years' experience of my care
 Has made at last familiar; she has lost
 Much of her vigilant instinctive dread, 340
 Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.
 Yes—thou may'st eat thy bread, and lick the hand
 That feeds thee; thou may'st frolic on the floor
 At evening, and at night retire secure
 To thy straw couch, and slumber unalarmed; 345
 For I have gained thy confidence, have pledged
 All that is human in me, to protect
 Thine unsuspecting gratitude and love.
 If I survive thee, I will dig thy grave;
 And when I place thee in it, sighing say, 350
 I knew at least one hare that had a friend.
 How various his employments whom the world
 Calls idle, and who justly, in return,
 Esteems that busy world an idler too!
 Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps his pen, 355
 Delightful industry enjoyed at home,
 And Nature in her cultivated trim
 Dressed to his taste, inviting him abroad—

Can he want occupation who has these?
 Will he be idle who has much to enjoy?
 Me, therefore, studious of laborious ease,
 Not slothful; happy to deceive the time
 Not waste it, and aware that human life
 Is but a loan, to be repaid with use,
 When He shall call his debtors to account
 From whom are all our blessings, business finds
 Even here: while sedulous I seek to improve,
 At least neglect not, or leave unemployed,
 The mind He gave me; driving it, though slack
 Too oft, and much impeded in its work
 By causes not to be divulged in vain,
 To its just point—the service of mankind.
 He that attends to his interior self;
 That has a heart, and keeps it; has a mind
 That hungers, and supplies it; and who seeks
 A social, not a dissipated life,
 Has business; feels himself engaged to achieve
 No unimportant, though a silent task.
 A life all turbulence and noise may seem
 To him that leads it, wise, and to be praised;
 But wisdom is a pearl with most success
 Sought in still water, and beneath clear skies.
 He that is ever occupied in storms,
 Or dives not for it, or brings up instead,
 Vainly industrious, a disgraceful prize.

The morning finds the self-sequestered man
 Fresh for his task, intend what task he may.
 Whether inclement seasons recommend
 His warm but simple home, where he enjoys,
 With her who shares his pleasures and his heart,
 Sweet converse, sipping calm the fragrant lymph
 Which neatly she prepares; then to his book
 Well-chosen, and not sullenly perused
 In selfish silence, but imparted oft,
 As aught occurs that she may smile to hear,
 Or turn to nourishment, digested well.

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Or if the garden with its many cares,
 All well repaid, demand him, he attends
 The welcome call, conscious how much the hand
 Of lubbard Labour needs his watchful eye, 400
 Oft loitering lazily if not o'erseen,
 Or misapplying his unskilful strength.
 Nor does he govern only, or direct,
 But much performs himself. No works, indeed,
 That ask robust, tough sinews, bred to toil, 405
 Servile employ; but such as may amuse
 Not tire, demanding rather skill than force.
 Proud of his well-spread walls, he views his trees,
 That meet (no barren interval between)
 With pleasure more than even their fruits afford, 410
 Which, save himself who trains them, none can feel;
 These therefore are his own peculiar charge,
 No meaner hand may discipline the shoots,
 None but his steel approach them. What is weak,
 Distempered, or has lost prolific powers, 415
 Impaired by age, his unrelenting hand
 Dooms to the knife; nor does he spare the soft
 And succulent, that feeds its giant growth
 But barren, at the expense of neighbouring twigs
 Less ostentatious, and yet studded thick 420
 With hopeful gems. The rest, no portion left
 That may disgrace his art, or disappoint
 Large expectation, he disposes neat
 At measured distances, that air and sun
 Admitted freely, may afford their aid, 425
 And ventilate and warm the swelling buds.
 Hence Summer has her riches, Autumn hence,
 And hence even Winter fills his withered hand
 With blushing fruits, and plenty not his own.
 Fair recompense of labour well bestowed, 430
 And wise precaution, which a clime so rude
 Makes needful still; whose Spring is but the child
 Of churlish Winter, in her froward moods
 Discovering much the temper of her sire.

For oft, as if in her the stream of mild
 Maternal nature had reversed its course,
 She brings her infants forth with many smiles,
 But, once delivered, kills them with a frown.
 He, therefore, timely warned, himself supplies
 Her want of care, screening and keeping warm
 The plenteous bloom, that no rough blast may sweep
 His garlands from the boughs. Again, as oft
 As the sun peeps, and vernal airs breathe mild,
 The fence withdrawn, he gives them every beam,
 And spreads his hopes before the blaze of day.

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To raise the prickly and green-coated gourd,
 So grateful to the palate, and when rare
 So coveted, else base and disesteemed—
 Food for the vulgar merely—is an art
 That toiling ages have but just matured,
 And at this moment unassayed in song.

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Yet gnats have had, and frogs and mice, long since,
 Their eulogy; those sang the Mantuan bard,
 And these the Grecian, in ennobling strains;
 And in thy numbers, Phillips, shines for aye
 The solitary Shilling. Pardon then,
 Ye sage dispensers of poetic fame,
 The ambition of one meaner far, whose powers,
 Presuming an attempt not less sublime,
 Pant for the praise of dressing to the taste
 Of critic appetite, no sordid fare,
 A cucumber, while costly yet and scarce.

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The stable yields a stercoreous heap,
 Impregnated with quick fermenting salts,
 And potent to resist the freezing blast;
 For ere the beech and elm have cast their leaf
 Deciduous, and when now November dark
 Checks vegetation in the torpid plant
 Exposed to his cold breath, the task begins.
 Warily therefore, and with prudent heed,
 He seeks a favoured spot; that where he builds
 The agglomerated pile, his frame may front

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The sun's meridian disk, and at the back
 Enjoy close shelter, wall, or reeds, or hedge
 Impervious to the wind. First he bids spread 475
 Dry fern or littered hay, that may imbibe
 The ascending damps; then leisurely impose,
 And lightly, shaking it with agile hand
 From the full fork, the saturated straw.

What longest binds the closest, forms secure 480
 The shapely side, that as it rises takes,
 By just degrees, an overhanging breadth,
 Sheltering the base with its projected eaves.
 The uplifted frame, compact at every joint,
 And overlaid with clear translucent glass, 485
 He settles next upon the sloping mount,
 Whose sharp declivity shoots off secure
 From the dashed pane the deluge as it falls:
 He shuts it close, and the first labour ends.

Thrice must the voluble and restless earth 490
 Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth,
 Slow gathering in the midst, through the square mass
 Diffused, attain the surface; when, behold!
 A pestilent and most corrosive steam,
 Like a gross fog Boeotian, rising fast, 495
 And fast condensed upon the dewy sash,
 Asks egress; which obtained, the overcharged
 And drenched conservatory breathes abroad,
 In volumes wheeling slow, the vapour dank,
 And purified, rejoices to have lost 500
 Its foul inhabitant. But to assuage
 The impatient fervour which it first conceives
 Within its reeking bosom, threatening death
 To his young hopes, requires discreet delay.
 Experience, slow preceptress, teaching oft 505
 The way to glory by miscarriage foul,
 Must prompt him, and admonish how to catch
 The auspicious moment, when the tempered heat
 Friendly to vital motion, may afford
 Soft fomentation, and invite the seed. 510

The seed, selected wisely, plump, and smooth,
 And glossy, he commits to pots of size
 Diminutive, well filled with well-prepared
 And fruitful soil, that has been treasured long,
 And drunk no moisture from the dripping clouds. 515

These on the warm and genial earth that hides
 The smoking manure, and overspreads it all,
 He places lightly, and as time subdues
 The rage of fermentation, plunges deep,
 In the soft medium, till they stand immersed. 520

Then rise the tender germs, upstarting quick
 And spreading wide their spongy lobes, at first
 Pale, wan, and livid, but assuming soon,
 If fanned by balmy and nutritious air,
 Strained through the friendly mats, a vivid green. 525

Two leaves produced, two rough indented leaves,
 Cautious he pinches from the second stalk
 A pimple that portends a future sprout,
 And interdicts its growth. Thence straight succeed
 The branches, sturdy to his utmost wish, 530

Prolific all, and harbingers of more.
 The crowded roots demand enlargement now,
 And transplantation in an ampler space.
 Indulged in what they wish, they soon supply
 Large foliage, overshadowing golden flowers, 535

Blown on the summit of the apparent fruit.
 These have their sexes; and when summer shines,
 The bee transports the fertilizing meal
 From flower to flower, and even the breathing air
 Wafts the rich prize to its appointed use. 540

Not so when winter scowls. Assistant Art
 Then acts in Nature's office, brings to pass
 The glad espousals, and ensures the crop.

Grudge not, ye rich, (since Luxury must have
 His dainties, and the World's more numerous half
 Lives by contriving delicacies for you) 545

Grudge not the cost. Ye little know the cares,
 The vigilance, the labour, and the skill,

That day and night are exercised, and hang
 Upon the ticklish balance of suspense, 550
 That ye may garnish your profuse regales
 With summer fruits, brought forth by wintry suns.
 Ten thousand dangers lie in wait to thwart
 The process. Heat and cold, and wind and steam,
 Moisture and drought, mice, worms, and swarming flies 555
 Minute as dust and numberless, oft work
 Dire disappointment that admits no cure,
 And which no care can obviate. It were long,
 Too long, to tell the expedients and the shifts
 Which he that fights a season so severe 560
 Devises, while he guards his tender trust,
 And oft at last in vain. The learned and wise,
 Sarcastic, would exclaim, and judge the song
 Cold as its theme, and like its theme the fruit
 Of too much labour, worthless when produced. 565

Who loves a garden loves a greenhouse too.
 Unconscious of a less propitious clime,
 There blooms exotic beauty, warm and snug,
 While the winds whistle, and the snows descend.
 The spiry myrtle with unwithering leaf 570
 Shines there, and flourishes. The golden boast
 Of Portugal and Western India there,
 The ruddier orange and the paler lime,
 Peep through their polished foliage at the storm,
 And seem to smile at what they need not fear. 575

The amomum there with intermingling flowers
 And cherries hangs her twigs. Geranium boasts
 Her crimson honours; and the spangled beau,
 Ficoides, glitters bright the winter long.
 All plants, of every leaf, that can endure 580

The winter's frown, if screened from his shrewd bite,
 Live there, and prosper. Those Ausonia claims,
 Levantine regions these, the Azores send
 Their jessamine, her jessamine remote
 Caffreia; foreigners from many lands, 585
 They form one social shade, as if convened

By magic summons of the Orphean lyre.
 Yet just arrangement, rarely brought to pass
 But by a master's hand, disposing well
 The gay diversities of leaf and flower, 590
 Must lend its aid to illustrate all their charms,
 And dress the regular yet various scene.
 Plant behind plant aspiring, in the van
 The dwarfish, in the rear retired, but still
 Sublime above the rest, the statelier stand. 595
 So once were ranged the sons of ancient Rome,
 A noble show! while Roscius trod the stage;
 And so, while Garrick, as renowned as he,
 The sons of Albion; fearing each to lose
 Some note of Nature's music from his lips, 600
 And covetous of Shakespeare's beauty, seen
 In every flash of his far-beaming eye.
 Nor taste alone and well-contrived display
 Suffice to give the marshalled ranks the grace
 Of their complete effect. Much yet remains 605
 Unsung, and many cares are yet behind,
 And more laborious; cares on which depends
 Their vigour, injured soon, not soon restored.
 The soil must be renewed, which often washed,
 Loses its treasure of salubrious salts, 610
 And disappoints the roots; the slender roots
 Close interwoven, where they meet the vase,
 Must smooth be shorn away; the sapless branch
 Must fly before the knife; the withered leaf
 Must be detached, and where it strews the floor, 615
 Swept with a woman's neatness, breeding else
 Contagion, and disseminating death.
 Discharge but these kind offices, (and who
 Would spare, that loves them, offices like these?)
 Well they reward the toil. The sight is pleased, 620
 The scent regaled, each odoriferous leaf,
 Each opening blossom, freely breathes abroad
 Its gratitude, and thanks him with its sweets.
 So manifold, all pleasing in their kind,

All healthful, are the employs of rural life,) 625
 Reiterated as the wheel of time
 Runs round; still ending, and beginning still.
 Nor are these all. To deck the shapely knoll,
 That softly swelled and gaily dressed appears
 A flowery island, from the dark green lawn 630
 Emerging, must be deemed a labour due
 To no mean hand, and asks the touch of taste.
 Here also grateful mixture of well matched
 And sorted hues (each giving each relief,
 And by contrasted beauty shining more) 635
 Is needful. Strength may wield the ponderous spade,
 May turn the clod, and wheel the compost home,
 But elegance, chief grace the garden shows,
 And most attractive, is the fair result
 Of thought, the creature of a polished mind. 640
 Without it, all is gothic as the scene
 To which the insipid citizen resorts
 Near yonder heath; where Industry mispent,
 But proud of his uncouth ill-chosen task,
 Has made a Heaven on earth; with suns and moons 645
 Of close-rammed stones has charged the encumbered soil,
 And fairly laid the zodiac in the dust.
 He, therefore, who would see his flowers disposed
 Sightly, and in just order, ere he gives
 The beds the trusted treasure of their seeds, 650
 Forecasts the future whole; that when the scene
 Shall break into its preconceived display,
 Each for itself, and all as with one voice
 Conspiring, may attest his bright design.
 Nor even then, dismissing as performed 655
 His pleasant work, may he suppose it done.
 Few self-supported flowers endure the wind
 Uninjured, but expect the upholding aid
 Of the smooth-shaven prop, and neatly tied,
 Are wedded thus, like beauty to old age, 660
 For interest sake, the living to the dead.
 Some clothe the soil that feeds them, far diffused

And lowly creeping, modest and yet fair,
 Like virtue thriving most where little seen;
 Some, more aspiring, catch the neighbour shrub
 With clasping tendrils, and invest his branch,
 Else unadorned, with many a gay festoon
 And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well
 The strength they borrow with the grace they lend.

665

All hate the rank society of weeds,
 Noisome, and ever greedy to exhaust
 The impoverished earth; an overbearing race
 That, like the multitude made faction-mad,
 Disturb good order, and degrade true worth.

670

—Oh blest seclusion from a jarring world,
 Which he, thus occupied, enjoys! Retreat
 Cannot indeed to guilty man restore
 Lost innocence, or cancel follies past,
 But it has peace, and much secures the mind
 From all assaults of evil, proving still
 A faithful barrier, not o'erleaped with ease
 By vicious Custom, raging uncontrolled
 Abroad, and desolating public life.

675

When fierce Temptation, seconded within
 By traitor Appetite, and armed with darts
 Tempered in hell, invades the throbbing breast,
 To combat may be glorious, and success
 Perhaps may crown us, but to fly is safe.

680

Had I the choice of sublunary good,
 What could I wish, that I possess not here?
 Health, leisure, means to improve it, friendship, peace,
 No loose or wanton, though a wandering Muse,
 And constant occupation without care.

685

Thus blest, I draw a picture of that bliss;
 Hopeless indeed that dissipated minds,
 And profligate abusers of a world
 Created fair so much in vain for them,
 Should seek the guiltless joys that I describe,
 Allured by my report: but sure no less,
 That self-condemned they must neglect the prize,

690

700

And what they will not taste must yet approve.

What we admire we praise, and when we praise,
Advance it into notice, that its worth
Acknowledged, others may admire it too.

I therefore recommend, though at the risk

705

Of popular disgust, yet boldly still,

The cause of piety, and sacred truth

And virtue, and those scenes which God ordained

Should best secure them, and promote them most;

Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive

710

Forsaken, or through folly not enjoyed.

Pure is the nymph, though liberal of her smiles,

And chaste, though unconfined, whom I extol.

Not as the prince in Shushan, when he called,

Vainglorious of her charms, his Vashti forth,

715

To grace the full pavilion. His design

Was but to boast his own peculiar good,

Which all might view with envy, none partake.

My charmer is not mine alone; my sweets,

And she that sweetens all my bitters too,

720

Nature, enchanting Nature, in whose form

And lineaments divine I trace a hand

That errs not, and find raptures still renewed,

Is free to all men—universal prize.

Strange that so fair a creature should yet want

725

Admirers, and be destined to divide

With meaner objects even the few she finds!

Stripped of her ornaments, her leaves, and flowers,

She loses all her influence. Cities then

Attract us, and neglected Nature pines,

730

Abandoned as unworthy of our love.

But are not wholesome airs, though unperfumed

By roses, and clear suns though scarcely felt,

And groves, if unharmonious yet secure

From clamour, and whose very silence charms,

735

To be preferred to smoke, to the eclipse

That metropolitan volcanoes make,

Whose Stygian throats breathe darkness all day long;

And to the stir of Commerce, driving slow,
 And thundering loud, with his ten thousand wheels? 740
 They would be, were not madness in the head,
 And folly in the heart; were England now
 What England was, plain, hospitable, kind,
 And undebauched. But we have bid farewell
 To all the virtues of those better days,
 And all their honest pleasures. Mansions once
 Knew their own masters, and laborious hinds,
 That had survived the father, served the son. 745
 Now the legitimate and rightful lord
 Is but a transient guest, newly arrived
 And soon to be supplanted. He that saw
 His patrimonial timber cast its leaf,
 Sells the last scantling, and transfers the price
 To some shrewd sharper, ere it buds again.
 Estates are landscapes, gazed upon awhile,
 Then advertised, and auctioneered away. 755
 The country starves, and they that feed the o'ercharged
 And surfeited lewd town with her fair dues,
 By a just judgment strip and starve themselves.
 The wings that waft our riches out of sight
 Grow on the gamester's elbows, and the alert
 And nimble motion of those restless joints
 That never tire, soon fans them all away.
 Improvement too, the idol of the age,
 Is fed with many a victim. Lo! he comes;— 765
 The omnipotent magician, Brown, appears!
 Down falls the venerable pile, the abode
 Of our forefathers—a grave, whiskered race,
 But tasteless. Springs a palace in its stead,
 But in a distant spot, where, more exposed,
 It may enjoy the advantage of the north
 And aguish east, till time shall have transformed
 Those naked acres to a sheltering grove. 770
 He speaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn,
 Woods vanish, hills subside, and valleys rise,
 And streams, as if created for his use,
 775

Pursue the track of his directing wand,
 Sinuous or straight, now rapid and now slow,
 Now murmuring soft, now roaring in cascades,
 Even as he bids ! The enraptured owner smiles. 780

'Tis finished, and yet, finished as it seems,
 Still wants a grace, the loveliest it could show,
 A mine to satisfy the enormous cost.
 Drained to the last poor item of his wealth,
 He sighs, departs, and leaves the accomplished plan, 785

That he has touched, retouched, many a long day
 Laboured, and many a night pursued in dreams,
 Just when it meets his hopes, and proves the Heaven
 He wanted, for a wealthier to enjoy !

And now perhaps the glorious hour is come, 790
 When having no stake left, no pledge to endear
 Her interests, or that gives her sacred cause
 A moment's operation on his love,
 He burns with most intense and flagrant zeal
 To serve his country. Ministerial grace 795

Deals him out money from the public chest ;
 Or if that mine be shut, some private purse
 Supplies his need with a usurious loan,
 To be refunded duly, when his vote
 Well-managed shall have earned its worthy price. 800

Oh innocent, compared with arts like these,
 Crape and cocked pistol, and the whistling ball
 Sent through the traveller's temples ! He that finds
 One drop of Heaven's sweet mercy in his cup,
 Can dig, beg, rot, and perish, well content, 805

So he may wrap himself in honest rags
 At his last gasp ; but could not for a world
 Fish up his dirty and dependent bread
 From pools and ditches of the commonwealth,
 Sordid and sickening at his own success. 810

Ambition, Avarice, Penury incurred
 By endless riot, Vanity, the Lust
 Of pleasure and variety, dispatch,
 As duly as the swallows disappear,

The world of wandering knights and squires to town. 815
 London engulphs them all! The shark is there,
 And the shark's prey ; the spendthrift, and the leech
 That sucks him ; there the sycophant, and he
 Who, with bare-headed and obsequious bows,
 Begs a warm office, doomed to a cold jail 820
 And groat per diem, if his patron frown.
 The levee swarms, as if in golden pomp
 Were charactered on every statesman's door,
 'Battered and bankrupt fortunes mended here.'
 These are the charms that sully and eclipse 825
 The charms of Nature. 'Tis the cruel gripe
 That lean hard-handed Poverty inflicts,
 The hope of better things, the chance to win,
 The wish to shine, the thirst to be amused,
 That at the sound of Winter's hoary wing 830
 Unpeople all our counties of such herds
 Of fluttering, loitering, cringing, begging, loose
 And wanton vagrants, as make London, vast
 And boundless as it is, a crowded coop.
 Oh thou resort and mart of all the earth, 835
 Chequered with all complexions of mankind,
 And spotted with all crimes ; in whom I see
 Much that I love, and more that I admire,
 And all that I abhor ; thou freckled fair
 That pleasest and yet shock'st me ; I can laugh, 840
 And I can weep, can hope, and can despond,
 Feel wrath and pity, when I think on thee !
 Ten righteous would have saved a city once,
 And thou hast many righteous.—Well for thee !
 That salt preserves thee ; more corrupted else, 845
 And therefore more obnoxious at this hour,
 Than Sodom in her day had power to be,
 For whom God heard his Abraham plead in vain.

BOOK IV.

THE WINTER EVENING.

ARGUMENT:—The post comes in, 1—The newspaper is read, 36—The world contemplated at a distance, 88—Address to Winter, 120—The rural amusements of a Winter evening compared with the fashionable ones, 193—Address to Evening, 243—A brown study, 267—Fall of snow in the evening, 302—The waggoner, 330—A poor family piece, 374—The rural thief, 429—Public houses, 466—The multitude of them censured, 500—The farmer's daughter, what she was, 513—What she is, 534—The simplicity of country manners almost lost, 553—Causes of the change, 576—Desertion of the country by the rich, 587—Neglect of magistrates, 593—The militia principally in fault, 613—The new recruit and his transformation, 623—Reflections on bodies corporate, 659—The love of rural objects natural to all, and never to be totally extinguished, 691.

HARK! 'tis the twanging horn! O'er yonder bridge
That with its wearisome but needful length
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright,
He comes, the herald of a noisy world, 5
With spattered boots, strapped waist, and frozen locks,
News from all nations lumbering at his back.
True to his charge, the close-packed load behind,
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destined inn, 10
And, having dropped the expected bag, pass on.
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
Cold and yet cheerful; messenger of grief
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some;
To him indifferent whether grief or joy. 15
Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,

Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet
 With tears that trickled down the writer's cheeks
 Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
 Or charged with amorous sighs of absent swains,
 Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
 His horse and him, unconscious of them all.
 But oh the important budget ! ushered in
 With such heart-shaking music, who can say
 What are its tidings ? Have our troops awaked ?
 Or do they still, as if with opium drugged,
 Snore to the murmurs of the Atlantic wave ?
 Is India free ? And does she wear her plumed
 And jewelled turban with a smile of peace ?
 Or do we grind her still ? The grand debate,
 The popular harangue, the tart reply,
 The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,
 And the loud laugh—I long to know them all ;
 I burn to set the imprisoned wranglers free,
 And give them voice and utterance once again.

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
 Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
 And while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn
 Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
 (That cheer but not inebriate,) wait on each,
 So let us welcome peaceful evening in.
 Not such his evening, who with shining face
 Sweats in the crowded theatre, and squeezed
 And bored with elbow-points through both his sides,
 Outscolds the ranting actor on the stage :
 Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb
 And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath
 Of patriots bursting with heroic rage,
 Or placemen all tranquillity and smiles.
 This folio of four pages, happy work !
 Which not even critics criticise ; that holds
 Inquisitive attention, while I read,
 Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,
 Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break ;

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What is it, but a map of busy life, 55
 Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns?
 Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge
 That tempts Ambition. On the summit, see
 The seals of office glitter in his eyes;
 He climbs, he pants, he grasps them! At his heels, 60
 Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,
 And with a dexterous jerk soon twists him down,
 And wins them, but to lose them in his turn.
 Here rills of oily eloquence in soft
 Meanders lubricate the course they take; 65
 The modest speaker is ashamed and grieved
 To engross a moment's notice, and yet begs,
 Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,
 However trivial all that he conceives.
 Sweet bashfulness! it claims at least this praise; 70
 The dearth of information and good sense
 That it foretells us, always comes to pass.
 Cataracts of declamation thunder here,
 There forests of no meaning spread the page,
 In which all comprehension wanders lost; 75
 While fields of pleasantry amuse us there
 With merry descants on a nation's woes.
 The rest appears a wilderness of strange
 But gay confusion; roses for the cheeks
 And lilies for the brows of faded age, 80
 Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,
 Heaven, earth, and ocean, plundered of their sweets,
 Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,
 Sermons, and city feasts, and favourite airs,
 Æthereal journeys, submarine exploits, 85
 And Katterfelto, with his hair on end
 At his own wonders, wondering for his bread.
 'Tis pleasant through the loopholes of retreat
 To peep at such a world; to see the stir
 Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd; 90
 To hear the roar she sends through all her gates
 At a safe distance, where the dying sound

Falls a soft murmur on the uninjured ear.
 Thus sitting, and surveying thus at ease
 The globe and its concerns, I seem advanced
 To some secure and more than mortal height,
 That liberates and exempts me from them all.
 It turns submitted to my view, turns round
 With all its generations; I behold
 The tumult, and am still. The sound of war
 Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me; 100
 Grieves, but alarms me not. I mourn the pride
 And avarice that make man a wolf to man;
 Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats
 By which he speaks the language of his heart, 105
 And sigh, but never tremble at the sound.
 He travels and expatiates, as the bee
 From flower to flower, so he from land to land;
 The manners, customs, policy of all
 Pay contribution to the store he gleans; 110
 He sucks intelligence in every clime,
 And spreads the honey of his deep research
 At his return, a rich repast for me.
 He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,
 Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes 115
 Discover countries, with a kindred heart
 Suffer his woes and share in his escapes;
 While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
 Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.
 O Winter, ruler of the inverted year,
 Thy scattered hair with sleet like ashes filled,
 Thy breath congealed upon thy lips, thy cheeks
 Fringed with a beard made white with other snows
 Than those of age, thy forehead wrapped in clouds, 120
 A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
 A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
 But urged by storms along its slippery way;
 I love thee, all unlovely as thou seemest,
 And dreaded as thou art! Thou holdest the sun 125
 A prisoner in the yet undawning east,

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Shortening his journey between morn and noon,
 And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,
 Down to the rosy west; but kindly still
 Compensating his loss with added hours
 Of social converse and instructive ease,
 And gathering, at short notice, in one group,
 The family dispersed, and fixing thought,
 Not less dispersed by daylight and its cares.

135

I crown thee king of intimate delights,
 Fireside enjoyments, homeborn happiness,
 And all the comforts that the lowly roof
 Of undisturbed Retirement, and the hours
 Of long uninterrupted evening know.
 No rattling wheels stop short before these gates;

140

No powdered pert proficient in the art
 Of sounding an alarm assaults these doors
 Till the street rings; no stationary steeds
 Cough their own knell, while, heedless of the sound,
 The silent circle fan themselves, and quake;
 But here the needle plies its busy task,
 The pattern grows, the well-depicted flower,
 Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,
 Unfolds its bosom; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,
 And curling tendrils, gracefully disposed,
 Follow the nimble finger of the fair;

145

A wreath that cannot fade, of flowers that blow

150

With most success when all besides decay.

The poet's or historian's page, by one

Made vocal for the amusement of the rest;

The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds

155

The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out;

And the clear voice, symphonious yet distinct,

And in the charming strife triumphant still,

Beguile the night, and set a keener edge

On female industry; the threaded steel

160

Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.

The volume closed, the customary rites

Of the last meal commence. A Roman meal,

165

Such as the mistress of the world once found
 Delicious, when her patriots of high note,
 Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,
 And under an old oak's domestic shade,
 Enjoyed, spare feast! a radish and an egg.
 Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,
 Nor such as with a frown forbids the play
 Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth:
 Nor do we madly, like an impious world,
 Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
 That made them an intruder on their joys,
 Start at his awful name, or deem his praise
 A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone,
 Exciting oft our gratitude and love,
 While we retrace with Memory's pointing wand,
 That calls the past to our exact review,
 The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare,
 The disappointed foe, deliverance found
 Unlooked for, life preserved, and peace restored,
 Fruits of omnipotent, eternal love.

'O evenings worthy of the gods!' exclaimed
 The Sabine bard. O evenings, I reply,
 More to be prized and coveted than yours,
 As more illumined, and with nobler truths,
 That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy.

Is winter hideous in a garb like this?
 Needs he the tragic fur, the smoke of lamps,
 The pent-up breath of an unsavoury throng,
 To thaw him into feeling, or the smart
 And snappish dialogue, that flippant wits
 Call comedy, to prompt him with a smile?
 The self-complacent actor, when he views
 (Stealing a side-long glance at a full house)
 The slope of faces from the floor to the roof,
 (As if one master-spring controlled them all)
 Relaxed into a universal grin,
 Sees not a countenance there that speaks of joy
 Half so refined or so sincere as ours.

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Cards were superfluous here, with all the tricks
 That idleness has ever yet contrived
 To fill the void of an unfurnished brain,
 To palliate dullness, and give time a shove. 210

Time as he passes us has a dove's wing,
 Unsoiled and swift, and of a silken sound,
 But the World's Time, is Time in masquerade.
 Theirs, should I paint him, has his pinions fledged
 With motley plumes, and, where the peacock shows 215
 His azure eyes, is tinctured black and red,
 With spots quadrangular of diamond form,
 Ensanguined hearts, clubs typical of strife,
 And spades the emblem of untimely graves.
 What should be, and what was an hourglass once, 220
 Becomes a dicebox, and a billiard-mast
 Well does the work of his destructive scythe.
 Thus decked, he charms a world whom Fashion blinds
 To his true worth, most pleased when idle most ;
 Whose only happy are their wasted hours. 225

Even misses, at whose age their mothers wore
 The backstring and the bib, assume the dress
 Of womanhood, sit pupils in the school
 Of card-devoted Time, and night by night
 Placed at some vacant corner of the board, 230
 Learn every trick, and soon play all the game.
 But truce with censure. Roving as I rove,
 Where shall I find an end, or how proceed?
 As he that travels far, oft turns aside
 To view some rugged rock or mouldering tower, 235
 Which seen delights him not ; then coming home,
 Describes and prints it, that the world may know
 How far he went for what was nothing worth ;]
 So I, with brush in hand and pallet spread,
 With colours mixed for a far different use, 240
 Paint cards and dolls, and every idle thing
 That Fancy finds in her excursive flights.

Come, Evening, once again, season of peace ;
 Return, sweet Evening, and continue long !

Methinks I see thee in the streaky west, 245
 With matron step slow moving, while the Night
 Treads on thy sweeping train; one hand employed
 In letting fall the curtain of repose
 On bird and beast, the other charged for man
 With sweet oblivion of the cares of day: 250
 Not sumptuously adorned, nor needing aid,
 Like homely-featured Night, of clustering gems;
 A star or two, just twinkling on thy brow,
 Suffices thee; save that the moon is thine
 No less than hers, not worn indeed on high 255
 With ostentatious pageantry, but set
 With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,
 Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.
 Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary calm,
 Or make me so. Composure is thy gift: 260
 And whether I devote thy gentle hours
 To books, to music, or the poet's toil;
 To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit;
 Or twining silken threads round ivory reels,
 When they command whom man was born to please; 265
 I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still.
 Just when our drawing rooms begin to blaze
 With lights, by clear reflection multiplied
 From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,
 Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk 270
 Whole without stooping, towering crest and all,
 My pleasures too begin. But me, perhaps,
 The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile
 With faint illumination, that uplifts
 The shadow to the ceiling, there by fits 275
 Dancing uncouthly, to the quivering flame.
 Not undelightful is an hour to me
 So spent in parlour twilight; such a gloom
 Suits well the thoughtful, or unthinking mind,
 The mind contemplative, with some new theme 280
 Pregnant, or indisposed alike to all.
 Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial powers

That never felt a stupor, know no pause,
Nor need one; I am conscious and confess,
Fearless, a soul that does not always think. 285

Me oft has Fancy, ludicrous and wild,
Soothed with a waking dream of houses, towers,
Trees, churches, and strange visages, expressed
In the red cinders, while with poring eye
I gazed, myself creating what I saw. 290

Nor less amused, have I quiescent watched
The sooty films that play upon the bars,
Pendulous, and foreboding, in the view
Of superstition, prophesying still
Though still deceived, some stranger's near approach. 295

'Tis thus the understanding takes repose
In indolent vacuity of thought,
And sleeps and is refreshed. Meanwhile the face
Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask
Of deep deliberation, as the man 300

Were tasked to his full strength, absorbed and lost.
Thus oft, reclined at ease, I lose an hour
At evening, till at length the freezing blast,
That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons home
The recollected powers, and snapping short 305

The glassy threads with which the Fancy weaves
Her brittle toys, restores me to myself.
How calm is my recess, and how the frost,
Raging abroad, and the rough wind, endear
The silence and the warmth enjoyed within. 310

I saw the woods and fields at close of day
A variegated show; the meadows green
Though faded; and the lands where lately waved
The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
Upturned so lately by the forceful share. 315

I saw far off the weedy fallows smile
With verdure not unprofitable, grazed
By flocks, fast feeding and selecting each
His favourite herb; while all the leafless groves
That skirt the horizon, wore a sable hue, 320

Scarce noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.
 To-morrow brings a change, a total change!
 Which even now, though silently performed
 And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face
 Of universal nature undergoes.

325

Fast falls a fleecy shower: the downy flakes
 Descending, and with never-ceasing lapse
 Softly alighting upon all below,
 Assimilate all objects. Earth receives
 Gladly the thickening mantle, and the green
 And tender blade, that feared the chilling blast,
 Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.

330

In such a world, so thorny, and where none
 Finds happiness unblighted, or if found,
 Without some thistly sorrow at its side,
 It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
 Against the law of love, to measure lots
 With less distinguished than ourselves, that thus
 We may with patience bear our moderate ills,
 And sympathise with others suffering more.

335

Ill fares the traveller now, and he that stalks
 In ponderous boots beside his reeking team.
 The wain goes heavily, impeded sore
 By congregated loads adhering close
 To the clogged wheels; and in its sluggish pace
 Noiseless, appears a moving hill of snow.

345

The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,
 While every breath, by respiration strong
 Forced downward, is consolidated soon
 Upon their jutting chests. He, formed to bear
 The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,
 With half-shut eyes, and puckered cheeks, and teeth
 Presented bare against the storm, plods on.
 One hand secures his hat, save when with both
 He brandishes his pliant length of whip,
 Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.
 O happy! and, in my account, denied
 That sensibility of pain with which

350

355

Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou!
Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels indeed
The piercing cold, but feels it unimpaired. 360
The learned finger never need explore
Thy vigorous pulse, and the unhealthful East,
That breathes the spleen, and searches every bone
Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee.

Thy days roll on exempt from household care;
Thy waggon is thy wife, and the poor beasts
That drag the dull companion to and fro,
Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.

Ah, 'treat them kindly! rude as thou appearest,
Yet show that thou hast mercy, which the great,
With needless hurry whirled from place to place,
Humane as they would seem, not always show.

Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat,
Such claim compassion in a night like this,
And have a friend in every feeling heart. 375
Warmed, while it lasts, by labour, all day long
They brave the season, and yet find at eve,
Ill-clad and fed but sparingly, time to cool.

The frugal housewife trembles when she lights
Her scanty stock of brushwood, blazing clear,
But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys.

The few small embers left she nurses well;
And while her infant race, with outspread hands
And crowded knees, sit cowering o'er the sparks, 380
Retires, content to quake, so they be warmed.

The man feels least, as more inured than she
To winter, and the current in his veins
More briskly moved by his severer toil;
Yet he too finds his own distress in theirs.

The taper soon extinguished, which I saw
Dangled along at the cold finger's end
Just when the day declined, and the brown loaf
Lodged on the shelf, half-eaten without sauce

Of savoury cheese, or butter costlier still,
Sleep seems their only refuge: for, alas! 395

Where penury is felt the thought is chainea,
And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few.
With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care
Ingenious Parsimony takes, but just 400
Saves the small inventory, bed and stool,
Skillet and old carved chest, from public sale.
They live, and live without extorted alms
From grudging hands, but other boast have none
To soothe their honest pride, that scorns to beg; 405
Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love.
I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,
For ye are worthy; choosing rather far
A dry but independent crust, hard earned
And eaten with a sigh, than to endure 410
The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs
Of knaves in office, partial in the work
Of distribution; liberal of their aid
To clamorous importunity in rags,
But oft-times deaf to suppliants who would blush 415
To wear a tattered garb however coarse,
Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth;
These ask with painful shyness, and, refused
Because deserving, silently retire.
But be ye of good courage. Time itself 420
Shall much befriend you. Time shall give increase,
And all your numerous progeny, well trained
But helpless, in few years shall find their hands,
And labour too. Meanwhile ye shall not want
What, conscious of your virtues, we can spare, 425
Nor what a wealthier than ourselves may send.
I mean the man who, when the distant poor
Need help, denies them nothing but his name.
But poverty, with most who whimper forth
Their long complaints, is self-inflicted woe, 430
The effect of laziness or sottish waste.
Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad
For plunder, much solicitous how best
He may compensate for a day of sloth,

By works of darkness and nocturnal wrong. 435

Woe to the gardener's pale, the farmer's hedge
Plashed neatly, and secured with driven stakes
Deep in the loamy bank. Uptorn by strength,
Resistless in so bad a cause but lame
To better deeds, he bundles up the spoil, 440
An ass's burden, and when laden most
And heaviest, light of foot steals fast away.
Nor does the boarded hovel better guard
The well-stacked pile of riven logs and roots
From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave 445
Unwrenched the door, however well secured,
Where chanticleer amidst his harem sleeps
In unsuspecting pomp. Twitched from the perch,
He gives the princely bird, with all his wives,
To his voracious bag, struggling in vain, 450
And loudly wondering at the sudden change.
Nor this to feed his own! 'Twere some excuse,
Did pity of their sufferings warp aside
His principle, and tempt him into sin
For their support, so destitute. But they 455
Neglected pine at home, themselves, as more
Exposed than others, with less scruple made
His victims, robbed of their defenceless all.
Cruel is all he does. 'Tis quenchless thirst
Of ruinous ebbriety that prompts 460
His every action, and imbrutes the man.
Oh for a law to noose the villain's neck
Who starves his own, who persecutes the blood
He gave them in his children's veins, and hates
And wrongs the woman he has sworn to love! 465

Pass where we may, through city or through town,
Village or hamlet, of this merry land,
Though lean and beggared, every twentieth pace
Conducts the unguarded nose to such a whiff
Of stale debauch, forth-issuing from the styes 470
That law has licensed, as makes Temperance reel.
There sit, involved and lost in curling clouds

Of Indian fume, and guzzling deep, the boor,
The lackey, and the groom; the craftsman there
Takes a Lethean leave of all his toil;

475

Smith, cobbler, joiner, he that plies the shears,
And he that kneads the dough; all loud alike,
All learned, and all drunk. The fiddle screams
Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wailed
Its wasted tones, and harmony unheard:

480

Fierce the dispute whate'er the theme; while she,
Fell Discord, arbitress of such debate,
Perched on the signpost, holds with even hand
Her undecisive scales. In this she lays
A weight of ignorance; in that, of pride;

485

And smiles delighted with the eternal poise.
Dire is the frequent curse, and its twin sound
The cheek-distending oath, not to be praised
As ornamental, musical, polite,

Like those which modern senators employ,
Whose oath is rhetoric, and who swear for fame.
Behold the schools in which plebeian minds,
Once simple, are initiated in arts,

490

Which some may practise with politer grace,
But none with readier skill!—'Tis here they learn
The road that leads from competence and peace
To indigence and rapine; till at last
Society, grown weary of the load,

495

Shakes her encumbered lap, and casts them out.
But censure profits little: vain the attempt
To advertise in verse a public pest,

500

That like the filth with which the peasant feeds
His hungry acres, stinks and is of use.

The excise is fattened with the rich result
Of all this riot; and ten thousand casks,
For ever dribbling out their base contents,
Touched by the Midas finger of the state,
Bleed gold for ministers to sport away.

505

Drink and be mad then; 'tis your country bids!
Gloriously drunk, obey the important call!

510

Her cause demands the assistance of your throats;
Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.

Would I had fallen upon those happier days
That poets celebrate; those golden times
And those Arcadian scenes that Maro sings,
And Sidney, warbler of poetic prose.

515

Nymphs were Dianas then, and swains had hearts
That felt their virtues; Innocence, it seems,
From courts dismissed, found shelter in the groves;
The footsteps of Simplicity, impressed
Upon the yielding herbage (so they sing),
Then were not all effaced; then speech profane,
And manners profligate, were rarely found,
Observed as prodigies, and soon reclaimed.

520

Vain wish! those days were never: airy dreams
Sat for the picture; and the poet's hand,
Imparting substance to an empty shade,
Imposed a gay delirium for a truth.
Grant it:—I still must envy them an age
That favoured such a dream, in days like these
Impossible, when Virtue is so scarce,
That to suppose a scene where she presides
Is tramontane, and stumbles all belief.

530

No: we are polished now! The rural lass,
Whom once her virgin modesty and grace,
Her artless manners, and her neat attire,
So dignified, that she was hardly less
Than the fair shepherdess of old romance,
Is seen no more. The character is lost!
Her head, adorned with lappets pinned aloft
And ribands streaming gay, superbly raised,
And magnified beyond all human size,
Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand
For more than half the tresses it sustains;
Her elbows ruffled, and her tottering form
Ill propped upon French heels; she might be deemed
(But that the basket dangling on her arm
Interprets her more truly) of a rank

535

540

545

Too proud for dairy work, or sale of eggs.
 Expect her soon with footboy at her heels,
 No longer blushing for her awkward load,
 Her train and her umbrella all her care.

550

The town has tinged the country; and the stain
 Appears a spot upon a vestal's robe,
 The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs
 Down into scenes still rural; but, alas,
 Scenes rarely graced with rural manners now!
 Time was when in the pastoral retreat

555

The unguarded door was safe; men did not watch
 To invade another's right, or guard their own.
 Then sleep was undisturbed by Fear, unscared
 By drunken howlings; and the chilling tale
 Of midnight murder was a wonder heard
 With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.

560

But farewell now to unsuspicious nights,
 And slumbers unalarmed! Now, ere you sleep,
 See that your polished arms be primed with care,
 And drop the night-bolt;—ruffians are abroad;
 And the first larum of the cock's shrill throat
 May prove a trumpet, summoning your ear

565

To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.
 Even daylight has its dangers; and the walk
 Through pathless wastes and woods, unconscious once
 Of other tenants than melodious birds
 Or harmless flocks, is hazardous and bold.

570

Lamented change! to which full many a cause
 Inveterate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.

The course of human things from good to ill,
 From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.

Increase of power begets increase of wealth;
 Wealth luxury, and luxury excess;

580

Excess, the scrofulous and itchy plague
 That seizes first the opulent, descends

To the next rank contagious, and in time
 Taints downward all the graduated scale

585

Of order, from the chariot to the plough.

The rich, and they that have an arm to check
 The licence of the lowest in degree,
 Desert their office; and themselves intent
 On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus, 590
 To all the violence of lawless hands
 Resign the scenes their presence might protect.
 Authority herself not seldom sleeps,
 Though resident, and witness of the wrong.
 The plump convivial parson often bears
 The magisterial sword in vain, and lays 595
 His reverence and his worship both to rest
 On the same cushion of habitual sloth.
 Perhaps timidity restrains his arm;
 When he should strike, he trembles and sets free, 600
 Himself enslaved by terror of the band,
 The audacious convict, whom he dares not bind.
 Perhaps, though by profession ghostly pure,
 He too may have his vice, and sometimes prove
 Less dainty than becomes his grave outside, 605
 In lucrative concerns. Examine well
 His milkwhite hand; the palm is hardly clean
 But here and there an ugly smutch appears.
 Foh! 'twas a bribe that left it: he has touched
 Corruption! Whoso seeks an audit here 610
 Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,
 Wildfowl or venison, and his errand speeds.
 But faster far, and more than all the rest,
 A noble cause, which none who bears a spark
 Of public virtue ever wished removed, 615
 Works the deplored and mischievous effect.
 'Tis universal soldiership has stabbed
 The heart of merit in the meaner class.
 Arms, through the vanity and brainless rage
 Of those that bear them, in whatever cause, 620
 Seem most at variance with all moral good,
 And incompatible with serious thought.
 The clown, the child of nature, without guile,
 Blest with an infant's ignorance of all

But his own simple pleasures, now and then 625
 A wrestling match, a footrace, or a fair,
 Is balloted, and trembles at the news:
 Sheepish he doffs his hat, and mumbling swears
 A Bible-oath to be whate'er they please,
 To do he knows not what. The task performed, 630
 That instant he becomes the serjeant's care,
 His pupil, and his torment, and his jest.
 His awkward gait, his introverted toes,
 Bent knees, round shoulders, and dejected looks,
 Procure him many a curse. By slow degrees, 635
 Unapt to learn, and formed of stubborn stuff,
 He yet by slow degrees puts off himself,
 Grows conscious of a change, and likes it well:
 He stands erect; his slouch becomes a walk;
 He steps right onward, martial in his air, 640
 His form, and movement; is as smart above
 As meal and larded locks can make him; wears
 His hat, or his plumed helmet, with a grace;
 And his three years of heroship expired,
 Returns indignant to the slighted plough. 645
 He hates the field in which no fife or drum
 Attends him, drives his cattle to a march,
 And sighs for the smart comrades he has left.
 'Twere well if his exterior change were all,
 But with his clumsy port the wretch has lost 650
 His ignorance and harmless manners too.
 To swear, to game, to drink; to show at home
 By lewdness, idleness, and sabbath-breach,
 The great proficiency he made abroad;
 To astonish and to grieve his gazing friends; 655
 To break some maiden's and his mother's heart;
 To be a pest where he was useful once;
 Are his sole aim, and all his glory now.
 Man in society is like a flower
 Blown in its native bed; 'tis there alone 660
 His faculties, expanded in full bloom,
 Shine out; there only reach their proper use. (

But man associated and leagued with man
 By regal warrant, or self-joined by bond
 For interest sake, or swarming into clans
 Beneath one head for purposes of war, 665
 Like flowers selected from the rest, and bound
 And bundled close to fill some crowded vase,
 Fades rapidly, and by compression marred,
 Contracts defilement not to be endured. 670

Hence chartered boroughs are such public plagues;
 And burghers, men immaculate perhaps
 In all their private functions, once combined,
 Become a loathsome body, only fit
 For dissolution, hurtful to the main. 675

Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin
 Against the charities of domestic life,
 Incorporated, seem at once to lose
 Their nature, and disclaiming all regard
 For mercy and the common rights of man, 680
 Build factories with blood, conducting trade
 At the sword's point, and dyeing the white robe
 Of innocent commercial Justice red.

Hence, too, the field of glory, as the world
 Misdeems it, dazzled by its bright array,
 With all its majesty of thundering pomp, 685
 Enchanting music, and immortal wreaths,
 Is but a school where thoughtlessness is taught
 On principle, where foppery atones
 For folly, gallantry for every vice. 690

But slighted as it is, and by the great
 Abandoned, and which still I more regret,
 Infected with the manners and the modes
 It knew not once, the country wins me still.
 I never framed a wish, or formed a plan, 695
 That flattered me with hopes of earthly bliss,
 But there I laid the scene. There early strayed
 My Fancy, ere yet liberty of choice
 Had found me, or the hope of being free.
 My very dreams were rural; rural too 700

The firstborn efforts of my youthful Muse,
 Sportive, and jingling her poetic bells,
 Ere yet her ear was mistress of their powers.
 No bard could please me but whose lyre was tuned
 To Nature's praises. Heroes and their feats
 Fatigued me, never weary of the pipe
 Of Tityrus, assembling, as he sang,
 The rustic throng beneath his favourite beech.
 Then MILTON had indeed a poet's charms:
 New to my taste his Paradise surpassed
 The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue
 To speak its excellence; I danced for joy;
 I marvelled much that, at so ripe an age
 As twice seven years, his beauties had then first
 Engaged my wonder, and admiring still,
 And still admiring, with regret supposed
 The joy half lost, because not sooner found.
 Thee too enamoured of the life I loved,
 Pathetic in its praise, in its pursuit
 Determined, and possessing it at last
 With transports such as favoured lovers feel,
 I studied, prized, and wished that I had known,
 Ingenious COWLEY! and though now reclaimed
 By modern lights from an erroneous taste,
 I cannot but lament thy splendid wit
 Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools,
 I still revere thee, courtly though retired;
 Though stretched at ease in Chertsey's silent bowers,
 Not unemployed, and finding rich amends
 For a lost world in solitude and verse.
 'Tis born with all: the love of Nature's works
 Is an ingredient in the compound, man,
 Infused at the creation of the kind.
 And though the Almighty Maker has throughout
 Discriminated each from each, by strokes
 And touches of his hand, with so much art
 Diversified, that two were never found
 Twins at all points—yet this obtains in all,

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That all discern a beauty in his works,
 And all can taste them: minds that have been formed 740
 And tutored with a relish more exact,
 But none without some relish, none unmoved.
 It is a flame that dies not even there
 Where nothing feeds it. Neither business, crowds,
 Nor habits of luxurious city-life, 745
 Whatever else they smother of true worth
 In human bosoms, quench it or abate.
 The villas with which London stands begirt,
 Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads,
 Prove it. A breath of unadulterate air, 750
 The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer
 The citizen, and brace his languid frame!
 Even in the stifling bosom of the town,
 A garden in which nothing thrives, has charms
 That soothe the rich possessor; much consoled 755
 That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,
 Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the well
 He cultivates. These serve him with a hint
 That Nature lives; that sight-refreshing green
 Is still the livery she delights to wear, 760
 Though sickly samples of the exuberant whole.
 What are the casements lined with creeping herbs,
 The prouder sashes fronted with a range
 Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed
 The Frenchman's darling? Are they not all proofs 765
 That man immured in cities, still retains
 His inborn inextinguishable thirst
 Of rural scenes, compensating his loss
 By supplemental shifts, the best he may?
 The most unfurnished with the means of life, 770
 And they that never pass their brick-wall bounds
 To range the fields and treat their lungs with air,
 Yet feel the burning instinct: over-head
 Suspend their crazy boxes, planted thick,
 And watered duly. There the pitcher stands 775
 A fragment, and the spoutless teapot there;

Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets
The country, with what ardour he contrives
A peep at Nature, when he can no more.

Hail, therefore, patroness of health and ease
And contemplation, heart-consoling joys
And harmless pleasures, in the thronged abode
Of multitudes unknown ! Hail, rural life !

Address himself who will to the pursuit
Of honours, or emolument, or fame,
I shall not add myself to such a chase,
Thwart his attempts, or envy his success.
Some must be great. Great offices will have
Great talents : and God gives to every man
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,
That lifts him into life, and lets him fall
Just in the niche he was ordained to fill.

To the deliverer of an injured land
He gives a tongue to enlarge upon, a heart
To feel, and courage to redress her wrongs;
To monarchs dignity : to judges sense;
To artists ingenuity and skill;
To me an unambitious mind, content
In the low vale of life, that early felt
A wish for ease and leisure, and ere long
Found here that leisure and that ease I wished.

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BOOK V.

THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

ARGUMENT:—A frosty morning, 1—The foddering of cattle, 27—The woodman and his dog, 41—The poultry, 57—Whimsical effects of frost at a waterfall, 96—The Empress of Russia's palace of ice, 127—Amusements of monarchs, 177—War, one of them, 185—Wars, whence, 193—And whence monarchy, 230—The evils of it, 242—English and French loyalty contrasted, 346—The Bastille, and a prisoner there, 379—Liberty the chief recommendation of this country, 446—Modern patriotism questionable, and why, 491—The perishable nature of the best human institutions, 509—Spiritual liberty not perishable, 538—The slavish state of man by nature, 581—Deliver him, Deist, if you can, 670—Grace must do it, 688—The respective merits of patriots and martyrs stated, 704—Their different treatment, 707—Happy freedom of the man whom grace makes free, 733—His relish of the works of God, 779—Address to the Creator, 845.

'TIS morning; and the sun, with ruddy orb
Ascending, fires the horizon; while the clouds
That crowd away before the driving wind,
More ardent as the disk emerges more,
Resemble most some city in a blaze, 5
Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray
Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,
And, tinging all with his own rosy hue,
From every herb and every spiry blade
Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field. 10
Mine, spindling into longitude immense,
In spite of gravity, and sage remark
That I myself am but a fleeting shade,
Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance

I view the muscular proportioned limb
 Transformed to a lean shank. The shapeless pair,
 As they designed to mock me, at my side
 Take step for step; and as I near approach
 The cottage, walk along the plastered wall,
 Preposterous sight! the legs without the man.

15

The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
 Beneath the dazzling deluge; and the bents
 And coarser grass, upspringing c'er the rest,
 Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine
 Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad,
 And fledged with icy feathers, nod superb.

20

The cattle mourn in corners where the fence
 Screens them, and seem half petrified to sleep
 In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
 Their wonted fodder, not like hungering man,
 Fretful if unsupplied, but silent, meek,
 And patient of the slow-paced swain's delay.

30

He from the stack carves out the accustomed load,
 Deep-plunging and again deep-plunging oft,
 His broad keen knife into the solid mass:
 Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,
 With such undeviating and even force
 He severs it away: no needless care,
 Lest storms should overset the leaning pile
 Deciduous, or its own unbalanced weight.

35

Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcerned
 The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the axe
 And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,
 From morn to eve his solitary task.

40

Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears
 And tail cropped short, half lurcher and half cur,
 His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
 Now creeps he slow; and now, with many a frisk
 Wide scampering, snatches up the drifted snow
 With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout;
 Then shakes his powdered coat, and barks for joy.
 Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl

45

50

Moves right toward the mark; nor stops for aught.
 But, now and then, with pressure of his thumb
 To adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube,
 That fumes beneath his nose: the trailing cloud
 Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.

Now from the roost, or from the neighbouring pale,
 Where diligent to catch the first faint gleam
 Of smiling day, they gossipped side by side,
 Come trooping at the housewife's well-known call
 The feathered tribes domestic. Half on wing
 And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood,
 Conscious, and fearful of too deep a plunge.

The sparrows peep, and quit the sheltering eaves,
 To seize the fair occasion. Well they eye
 The scattered grain, and thievishly resolved
 To escape the impending famine, often scared
 As oft return, a pert voracious kind.

Clean riddance quickly made, one only care
 Remains to each, the search of sunny nook,
 Or shed impervious to the blast. Resigned
 To sad necessity, the cock foregoes
 His wonted strut, and wading at their head
 With well considered steps, seems to resent
 His altered gait, and stateliness retrenched.
 How find the myriads that in summer cheer
 The hills and valleys with their ceaseless songs,
 Due sustenance, or where subsist they now?

Earth yields them naught: the imprisoned worm is safe 80
 Beneath the frozen clod; all seeds of herbs
 Lie covered close; and berry-bearing thorns
 That feed the thrush (whatever some suppose)
 Afford the smaller minstrels no supply.

The long protracted rigour of the year
 Thins all their numerous flocks. In chinks and holes
 Ten thousand seek an unmolested end,
 As instinct prompts; self-buried ere they die.
 The very rooks and daws forsake the fields,
 Where neither grub, nor root, nor earth-nut, now 90

Repays their labour more; and perched aloft
 By the wayside, or stalking in the path,
 Lean pensioners upon the traveller's track,
 Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet to them,
 Of voided pulse or half-digested grain.

95

The streams are lost amid the splendid blank,
 O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood,
 Indurated and fixed, the snowy weight
 Lies undissolved; while silently beneath,
 And unperceived, the current steals away.

100

Not so, where, scornful of a check, it leaps
 The mill-dam, dashes on the restless wheel,
 And wantons in the pebbly gulf below:
 No frost can bind it there; its utmost force
 Can but arrest the light and smoky mist
 That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.
 And see where it has hung the embroidered banks
 With forms so various, that no powers of art,
 The pencil, or the pen, may trace the scene!

105

Here glittering turrets rise, upbearing high
 (Fantastic misarrangement!) on the roof
 Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees
 And shrubs of fairy land. The crystal drops
 That trickle down the branches, fast congealed,
 Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,
 And prop the pile they but adorned before.

110

Here grotto within grotto safe defies
 The sunbeam; there embossed and fretted wild,
 The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes
 Capricious, in which Fancy seeks in vain
 The likeness of some object seen before.

120

Thus Nature works as if to mock at Art,
 And in defiance of her rival powers;
 By these fortuitous and random strokes
 Performing such inimitable feats,
 As she with all her rules can never reach.

125

Less worthy of applause, though more admired,
 Because a novelty, the work of man,

Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ!
 Thy most magnificent and mighty freak,
 The wonder of the North. No forest fell
 When thou wouldest build, no quarry sent its stores
 To enrich thy walls, but thou didst hew the floods,
 And make thy marble of the glassy wave.

In such a palace Aristæus found 135
 Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale
 Of his lost bees to her maternal ear.
 In such a palace Poetry might place
 The armoury of Winter; where his troops,
 The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy sleet,
 Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,
 And snow that often blinds the traveller's course,
 And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.
 Silently as a dream the fabric rose;
 No sound of hammer or of saw was there. 145
 Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts
 Were soon conjoined; nor other cement asked
 Than water interfused to make them one.
 Lamps gracefully disposed, and of all hues,
 Illumined every side: a watery light 150
 Gleamed through the clear transparency, that seemed
 Another moon new risen, or meteor fallen
 From Heaven to Earth, of lambent flame serene.
 So stood the brittle prodigy; though smooth
 And slippery the materials, yet frostbound 155
 Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within,
 That royal residence might well befit,
 For grandeur or for use. Long wavy wreaths
 Of flowers that feared no enemy but warmth,
 Blushed on the panels. Mirror needed none 160
 Where all was vitreous; but in order due
 Convivial table and commodious seat
 (What seemed at least commodious seat) were there,
 Sofa, and couch, and high built throne august.
 The same lubricity was found in all, 165
 And all was moist to the warm touch; a scene

Of evanescent glory, once a stream,
 And soon to slide into a stream again.
 Alas! 'twas but a mortifying stroke
 Of undesigned severity, that glanced
 (Made by a monarch) on her own estate,
 On human grandeur and the courts of kings.
 'Twas transient in its nature, as in show
 'Twas durable; as worthless as it seemed
 Intrinsically precious; to the foot
 Treacherous and false; it smiled, and it was cold.

170

Great princes have great playthings. Some have played
 At hewing mountains into men, and some
 At building human wonders mountain high.
 Some have amused the dull sad years of life,
 Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad,
 With schemes of monumental fame; and sought
 By pyramids and mausolean pomp,
 Shortlived themselves, to immortalize their bones.
 Some seek diversion in the tented field,
 And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.
 But war's a game, which were their subjects wise,
 Kings would not play at.) Nations would do well
 To extort their truncheons from the puny hands
 Of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds
 Are gratified with mischief, and who spoil,
 Because men suffer it, their toy the World.

180

When Babel was confounded, and the great

Confederacy of projectors wild and vain

Was split into diversity of tongues,

190

Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,

These to the upland, to the valley those,

God drove asunder, and assigned their lot

To all the nations. Ample was the boon

He gave them, in its distribution fair

195

And equal, and he bade them dwell in peace.

Peace was awhile their care: they ploughed and sowed,

And reaped their plenty without grudge or strife.

But Violence can never longer sleep

200

Than human passions please. In every heart 205
 Are sown the sparks that kindle fiery war;
 Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze.
 Cain had already shed a brother's blood;
 The Deluge washed it out; but left unquenched
 The seeds of murder in the breast of man. 210

Soon, by a righteous judgment, in the line
 Of his descending progeny 'was found
 The first artificer of death; the shrewd
 Contriver who first sweated at the forge,
 And forced the blunt and yet unbloodied steel 215
 To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.
 Him, Tubal named, the Vulcan of old times,
 The sword and falchion their inventor claim,
 (And the first smith was the first murderer's son.) 220

His art survived the waters; and ere long,
 When man was multiplied and spread abroad
 In tribes and clans, and had begun to call
 These meadows and that range of hills his own,
 The tasted sweets of property begat 225

Desire of more; and industry in some
 To improve and cultivate their just demesne,
 Made others covet what they saw so fair.
 Thus war began on earth: these fought for spoil,
 And those in self-defence. Savage at first 230

The onset, and irregular. At length
 One eminent above the rest for strength,
 For stratagem, or courage, or for all,
 Was chosen leader; him they served in war,
 And him in peace, for sake of warlike deeds 235

Reverenced no less. Who could with him compare?
 Or who so worthy to control themselves,
 As he whose prowess had subdued their foes?
 Thus war affording field for the display
 Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace, 240
 Which have their exigencies too, and call
 For skill in government, at length made king.
 King was a name too proud for man to wear

With modesty and meekness, and the crown,
So dazzling in their eyes who set it on,
Was sure to intoxicate the brows it bound.

245

It is the abject property of most,
That being parcel of the common mass,
And destitute of means to raise themselves,
They sink and settle lower than they need.
They know not what it is to feel within

250

A comprehensive faculty that grasps
Great purposes with ease, that turns and wields,
Almost without an effort, plans too vast
For their conception, which they cannot move.

255

Conscious of impotence they soon grow drunk
With gazing, when they see an able man
Step forth to notice; and, besotted thus,
Build him a pedestal, and say, 'Stand there,
And be our admiration and our praise.'

They roll themselves before him in the dust,
Then most deserving in their own account,
When most extravagant in his applause,
As if exalting him they raised themselves.

260

Thus by degrees self-cheated of their sound
And sober judgment that he is but man,
They demi-deify and fume him so,
That in due season he forgets it too.

265

Inflated and astrut with self-conceit,
He gulps the windy diet, and ere long,
Adopting their mistake, profoundly thinks
The world was made in vain, if not for him.
Thenceforth they are his cattle: drudges born
To bear his burdens, drawing in his gears,
And sweating in his service; his caprice
Becomes the soul that animates them all.

270

He deems a thousand or ten thousand lives,
Spent in the purchase of renown for him,
An easy reckoning, and they think the same.
Thus kings were first invented, and thus kings
Were burnished into heroes, and became

275

280

The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp,
 Storks among frogs, that have but croaked and died.
 Strange that such folly as lifts bloated man
 To eminence fit only for a God,
 Should ever drivel out of human lips, 285
 Even in the cradled weakness of the world !
 Still stranger much that when at length mankind
 Had reached the sinewy firmness of their youth,
 And could discriminate and argue well
 On subjects more mysterious, they were yet 290
 Babes in the cause of freedom, and should fear
 And quake before the Gods themselves had made.
 But above measure strange, that neither proof
 Of sad experience, nor examples set
 By some whose patriot virtue has prevailed, 295
 Can even now, when they are grown mature
 In wisdom, and with philosophic deeps
 Familiar, serve to emancipate the rest !
 Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone
 To reverence what is ancient, and can plead
 A course of long observance for its use, 300
 That even servitude, the worst of ills,
 Because delivered down from sire to son,
 Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing.
 But is it fit, or can it bear the shock
 Of rational discussion, that a man, 305
 Compounded and made up like other men
 Of elements tumultuous, in whom lust
 And folly in as ample measure meet
 As in the bosoms of the slaves he rules,
 Should be a despot absolute, and boast 310
 Himself the only freeman of his land ?
 Should, when he pleases, and on whom he will,
 Wage war, with any or with no pretence
 Of provocation given or wrong sustained,
 And force the beggarly last doit, by means 315
 That his own humour dictates, from the clutch
 Of Poverty, that thus he may procure

His thousands, weary of penurious life,
A splendid opportunity to die?

320

Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old
Jotham ascribed to his assembled trees
In politic convention) put your trust
In the shadow of a bramble, and reclined

In fancied peace beneath his dangerous branch,
Rejoice in him, and celebrate his sway,

325

Where find ye passive fortitude? Whence springs
Your self-denying zeal, that holds it good
To stroke the prickly grievance, and to hang
His thorns with streamers of continual praise?

330

We too are friends to loyalty. We love
The king who loves the law, respects his bounds,
And reigns content within them: him we serve
Freely and with delight, who leaves us free:

335

But recollecting still that he is man,
We trust him not too far. King though he be,
And king in England too, he may be weak
And vain enough to be ambitious still,
May exercise amiss his proper powers,

340

Or covet more than freemen choose to grant:
Beyond that mark is treason. He is ours,
To administer, to guard, to adorn the state,
But not to warp or change it. We are his,
To serve him nobly in the common cause,

345

True to the death, but not to be his slaves.
Mark now the difference, ye that boast your love

Of kings, between your loyalty and ours.

We love the man; the paltry pageant you:

We the chief patron of the commonwealth;

You the regardless author of its woes:

350

We, for the sake of liberty, a king;

You chains and bondage for a tyrant's sake.

Our love is principle, and has its root

In reason, is judicious, manly, free;

Yours, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod,

355

And licks the foot that treads it in the dust.

Were kingship as true treasure as it seems,
 Sterling, and worthy of a wise man's wish,
 I would not be a king to be beloved
 Causeless, and daubed with undiscerning praise,
 Where love is mere attachment to the throne,
 Not to the man who fills it as he ought.

360

Whose freedom is by sufferance, and at will
 Of a superior, he is never free.

Who lives, and is not weary of a life
 Exposed to manacles, deserves them well.

365

The State that strives for liberty, though foiled,
 And forced to abandon what she bravely sought,
 Deserves at least applause for her attempt,
 And pity for her loss. But that's a cause

370

Not often unsuccessful: power usurped ✓
 Is weakness when opposed; conscious of wrong,
 'Tis pusillanimous and prone to flight.

But slaves that once conceive the glowing thought
 Of freedom, in that hope itself possess
 All that the contest calls for; spirit, strength,
 The scorn of danger, and united hearts,
 The surest presage of the good they seek.

375

Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more
 To France than all her losses and defeats,
 Old or of later date, by sea or land,

380

Her house of bondage, worse than that of old
 Which God avenged on Pharaoh—the Bastille.

Ye horrid towers, the abode of broken hearts,
 Ye dungeons and ye cages of despair,

385

That monarchs have supplied, from age to age,
 With music such as suits their sovereign ears,
 The sighs and groans of miserable men!

There's not an English heart that would not leap
 To hear that ye were fallen at last; to know
 That even our enemies, so oft employed

•

In forging chains for us, themselves were free.
 For he that values Liberty confines
 His zeal for her predominance within

C. S. A.

No narrow bounds; her cause engages him
 Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.
 There dwell the most forlorn of human kind,
 Immured though unaccused, condemned untried,
 Cruelly spared, and hopeless of escape!

395

There, like the visionary emblem seen
 By him of Babylon, life stands a stump,
 And filleted about with hoops of brass,
 Still lives, though all his pleasant boughs are gone.

400

To count the hour-bell, and expect no change;
 And ever, as the sullen sound is heard,
 Still to reflect, that though a joyless note
 To him whose moments all have one dull pace,
 Ten thousand rovers in the world at large
 Account it music; that it summons some
 To theatre, or jocund feast, or ball;

405

The wearied hireling finds it a release
 From labour; and the lover, who has chid
 Its long delay, feels every welcome stroke
 Upon his heart-strings, trembling with delight—
 To fly for refuge from distracting thought
 To such amusements as ingenious woe
 Contrives, hard shifting, and without her tools—
 To read, engraven on the mouldy walls
 In staggering types, his predecessor's tale,
 A sad memorial, and subjoin his own—

410

To turn purveyor to an overgorged
 And bloated spider, till the pampered pest
 Is made familiar, watches his approach,
 Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend—
 To wear out time in numbering to and fro
 The studs that thick emboss his iron door,
 Then downward and then upward, then aslant
 And then alternate, with a sickly hope
 By dint of change to give his tasteless task
 Some relish, till the sum, exactly found
 In all directions, he begins again—
 Oh comfortless existence! hemmed around

420

425

430

With woes, which who that suffers would not kneel
 And beg for exile, or the pangs of death?
 That man should thus encroach on fellow man, 435
 Abridge him of his just and native rights,
 Eradicate him, tear him from his hold
 Upon the endearments of domestic life
 And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,
 And doom him for perhaps a heedless word 440
 To barrenness, and solitude, and tears,
 Moves indignation, makes the name of king,
 (Of king whom such prerogative can please)
 As dreadful as the Manichean God,
 Adored through fear, strong only to destroy. 445

'Tis Liberty alone that gives the flower
 Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,
 And we are weeds without it. All constraint,)
 Except what wisdom lays on evil men,
 Is evil; hurts the faculties, impedes 450
 Their progress in the road of science; blinds
 The eyesight of Discovery; and begets,
 In those that suffer it, a sordid mind
 Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit
 To be the tenant of man's noble form. 455

Thee therefore still, blame-worthy as thou art,
 With all thy loss of empire, and though squeezed
 By public exigence, till annual food
 Fails for the craving hunger of the state,
 Thee I account still happy, and the chief 460
 Among the nations, seeing thou art free,
 My native nook of earth! Thy clime is rude,
 Replete with vapours, and disposes much
 All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine;
 Thine unadulterate manners are less soft 465
 And plausible than social life requires,
 And thou hast need of discipline and art
 To give thee what politer France receives
 From Nature's bounty—that humane address
 And sweetness, without which no pleasure is 470

In converse, either starved by cold reserve,
 Or flushed with fierce dispute, a senseless brawl ;
 Yet being free, I love thee : for the sake
 Of that one feature can be well content,
 Disgraced as thou hast been, poor as thou art,
 To seek no sublunary rest beside.

475

But once enslaved, farewell ! I could endure
 Chains nowhere patiently, and chains at home,
 Where I am free by birthright, not at all.

Then what were left of roughness in the grain
 Of British natures, wanting its excuse
 That it belongs to freemen, would disgust
 And shock me. I should then with double pain
 Feel all the rigour of thy fickle clime ;

480

And if I must bewail the blessing lost,
 For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled,
 I would at least bewail it under skies
 Milder, among a people less austere,
 In scenes which, having never known me free,
 Would not reproach me with the loss I felt.

485

Do I forebode impossible events,
 And tremble at vain dreams ? Heaven grant I may !
 But the age of virtuous politics is past,
 And we are deep in that of cold pretence.

490

Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere,
 And we too wise to trust them. He that takes
 Deep in his soft credulity the stamp
 Designed by loud declaimers on the part
 Of Liberty, themselves the slaves of lust,
 Incurs derision for his easy faith

495

And lack of knowledge, and with cause enough :
 For when was public virtue to be found
 Where private was not ? Can he love the whole
 Who loves no part ? He be a nation's friend
 Who is, in truth, the friend of no man there ?
 Can he be strenuous in his country's cause,
 Who slighted the charities for whose dear sake
 That country, if at all, must be beloved ?

500

505

'Tis therefore sober and good men are sad
 For England's glory, seeing it wax pale 510
 And sickly, while her champions wear their hearts
 So loose to private duty, that no brain,
 Healthful and undisturbed by factious fumes,
 Can dream them trusty to the general weal.
 Such were not they of old, whose tempered blades 515
 Dispersed the shackles of usurped control,
 And hewed them link from link. Then Albion's sons
 Were sons indeed; they felt a filial heart
 Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs,
 And shining each in his domestic sphere, 520
 Shone brighter still, once called to public view.
 'Tis therefore, many whose sequestered lot
 Forbids their interference, looking on,
 Anticipate perforce some dire event;
 And seeing the old castle of the state, 525
 That promised once more firmness, so assailed
 That all its tempest-beaten turrets shake,
 Stand motionless expectants of its fall.
 All has its date below; the fatal hour
 Was registered in Heaven ere time began. 530
 We turn to dust, and all our mightiest works
 Die too: the deep foundations that we lay,
 Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.
 We build with what we deem eternal rock;
 A distant age asks where the fabric stood, 535
 And in the dust, sifted and searched in vain,
 The undiscoverable secret sleeps.
 But there is yet a Liberty unsung
 By poets, and by senators unpraised,
 Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers 540
 Of Earth and Hell confederate take away:
 A liberty which persecution, fraud,
 Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind,
 Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more.
 'Tis Liberty of Heart, derived from Heaven, 545
 Bought with His blood who gave it to mankind,

And sealed with the same token. It is held
 By charter, and that charter sanctioned sure
 By the unimpeachable and awful oath
 And promise of a God.) His other gifts
 All bear the royal stamp that speaks them his,
 And are august, but this transcends them all.
 His other works, the visible display
 Of all-creating energy and might,
 Are grand, no doubt, and worthy of the Word
 That finding an interminable space
 Unoccupied, has filled the void so well,
 And made so sparkling what was dark before.
 But these are not his glory. Man, 'tis true,
 Smit with the beauty of so fair a scene,
 Might well suppose the artificer divine
 Meant it eternal, had he not himself
 Pronounced it transient, glorious as it is,
 And still designing a more glorious far,
 Doomed it, as insufficient for his praise.
 These, therefore, are occasional, and pass;
 Formed for the confutation of the fool
 Whose lying heart disputes against a God;
 That office served, they must be swept away.
 Not so the labours of his love: they shine
 In other heavens than these that we behold,
 And fade not. There is Paradise that fears
 No forfeiture, and of its fruits he sends
 Large prelibation oft to saints below.
 Of these the first in order, and the pledge
 And confident assurance of the rest,
 Is Liberty: a flight into his arms,
 Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way;
 A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,
 And full immunity from penal woe.
Chains are the portion of revolted man,
 Stripes, and a dungeon; and his body serves
 The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,
 Opprobrious residence, he finds them all.

550

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580

Propense his heart to idols, he is held 585
In silly dotage on created things,
Careless of their Creator. And that low
And sordid gravitation of his powers
To a vile clod, so draws him, with such force
Resistless from the centre he should seek,
That he at last forgets it. All his hopes
Tend downward; his ambition is to sink,
To reach a depth profounder still, and still
Profounder, in the fathomless abyss
Of folly, plunging in pursuit of death.
But ere he gain the comfortless repose 595
He seeks, an acquiescence of his soul
In heaven-renouncing exile, he endures—
What does he not, from lusts opposed in vain,
And self-reproaching conscience? He foresees 600
The fatal issue to his health, fame, peace,
Fortune, and dignity; the loss of all
That can ennable man, and make frail life,
Short as it is, supportable. Still worse,
Far worse than all the plagues with which his sins 605
Infect his happiest moments, he forebodes
Ages of hopeless misery. Future death,
And death still future. Not a hasty stroke,
Like that which sends him to the dusty grave,
But unrepealable enduring death. 610
Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears:
What none can prove a forgery, may be true;
What none but bad men wish exploded, must.
That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud
Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midst 615
Of laughter his compunctions are sincere,
And he abhors the jest by which he shines.
Remorse begets reform. His master-lust
Falls first before his resolute rebuke,
And seems dethroned and vanquished. Peace ensues, 620
But spurious and short-lived; the puny child
Of self-congratulating Pride, begot

On fancied Innocence. Again he falls,
And fights again; but finds his best essay
A presage ominous, portending still
Its own dishonour by a worse relapse.
Till Nature, unavailing Nature, foiled
So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,
Scoffs at her own performance. Reason now
Takes part with Appetite, and pleads the cause
Perversely, which of late she so condemned;
With shallow shifts and old devices, worn
And tattered in the service of debauch,
Covering his shame from his offended sight.

625 .

‘Hath God indeed given appetites to man,
‘And stored the earth so plenteously with means
‘To gratify the hunger of his wish,
‘And doth he reprobate and will he damn
‘The use of his own bounty?—making first
‘So frail a kind, and then enacting laws
‘So strict, that less than perfect must despair?
‘Falsehood! which whoso but suspects of truth
‘Dishonours God, and makes a slave of man.
‘Do they themselves, who undertake for hire
‘The teacher’s office, and dispense at large
‘Their weekly dole of edifying strains,
‘Attend to their own music? Have they faith
‘In what, with such solemnity of tone
‘And gesture, they propound to our belief?
‘Nay—conduct hath the loudest tongue. The voice
‘Is but an instrument on which the priest
‘May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,
‘The unequivocal, authentic deed,
‘We find sound argument, we read the heart.’

635

Such reasonings (if that name must needs belong
To excuses in which reason has no part)
Serve to compose a spirit well inclined
To live on terms of amity with vice,
And sin without disturbance. Often urged,
(As often as libidinous discourse

640

645

650

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660

Exhausted, he resorts to solemn themes
 Of theological and grave import)
 They gain at last his unreserved assent ;
 Till hardened his heart's temper in the forge
 Of lust, and on the anvil of despair, 665
 He slighted the strokes of conscience. Nothing moves,
 Or nothing much, his constancy in ill,
 Vain tampering has but fostered his disease,
 'Tis desperate, and he sleeps the sleep of death.
 Haste now, philosopher, and set him free. 670
 Charm the deaf serpent wisely. Make him hear
 Of rectitude and fitness, moral truth
 How lovely, and the moral sense how sure,
 Consulted and obeyed, to guide his steps
 Directly to the FIRST AND ONLY FAIR. 675
 Spare not in such a cause. Spend all the powers
 Of rant and rhapsody in virtue's praise :
 Be most sublimely good, verbosely grand,
 And with poetic trappings grace thy prose,
 Till it out-mantle all the pride of verse.— 680
 Ah, tinkling cymbal and high-sounding brass,
 Smitten in vain ! such music cannot charm
 The eclipse that intercepts truth's heavenly beam,
 And chills and darkens a wide-wandering soul.
 The still small voice is wanted. He must speak, 685
 Whose word leaps forth at once to its effect,
 Who calls for things that are not, and they come.
 Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change
 That turns to ridicule the turgid speech
 And stately tone of moralists, who boast, 690
 As if, like him of fabulous renown,
 They had indeed ability to smooth
 The shag of savage nature, and were each
 An Orpheus, and omnipotent in song.
 But transformation of apostate man 695
 From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,
 Is work for him that made him. He alone,
 And He by means in philosophic eyes

Trivial and worthy of disdain, achieves
 The wonder; humanizing what is brute
 In the lost kind, extracting from the lips
 Of asps their venom, overpowering strength
 By weakness, and hostility by love.

700

Patriots have toiled, and in their country's cause
 Bled nobly, and their deeds, as they deserve,
 Receive proud recompense. We give in charge
 Their names to the sweet lyre. The Historic Muse,
 Proud of the treasure, marches with it down
 To latest times; and Sculpture, in her turn,
 Gives bond in stone and ever-during brass
 To guard them, and to immortalize her trust.)
 But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,
 To those who, posted at the shrine of Truth,
 Have fallen in her defence. A Patriot's blood,
 Well spent in such a strife, may earn indeed,
 And for a time ensure, to his loved land
 The sweets of Liberty and equal laws;
 But Martyrs struggle for a brighter prize,
 And win it with more pain. Their blood is shed
 In confirmation of the noblest claim,
 Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
 To walk with God, to be divinely free,
 To soar, and to anticipate the skies.

710

Yet few remember them. They lived unknown
 Till Persecution dragged them into fame,
 And chased them up to Heaven. Their ashes flew—
 No marble tells us whither. With their names
 No bard embalms and sanctifies his song;
 And History, so warm on meaner themes,
 Is cold on this. She execrates indeed
 The tyranny that doomed them to the fire,
 But gives the glorious sufferers little praise.

720

(He is the freeman whom the Truth makes free,
 And all are slaves beside.) There's not a chain
 That hellish foes, confederate for his harm,
 Can wind around him, but he casts it off

730

735

With as much ease as Samson his green withes.
 He looks abroad into the varied field
 Of Nature, and though poor perhaps compared
 With those whose mansions glitter in his sight, 740
 Calls the delightful scenery all his own.
 His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
 And the resplendent rivers. His to enjoy
 With a propriety that none can feel,
 But who, with filial confidence inspired, 745
 Can lift to Heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
 And smiling say—‘My Father made them all.’
 Are they not his by a peculiar right,
 And by an emphasis of interest his,
 Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy, 750
 Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind
 With worthy thoughts of that unwearied Love
 That planned, and built, and still upholds a world
 So clothed with beauty, for rebellious man?
 Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap 755
 The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good
 In senseless riot; but ye will not find
 In feast or in the chase, in song or dance,
 A liberty like his, who unimpeached
 Of usurpation, and to no man’s wrong, 760
 Appropriates nature as his Father’s work,
 And has a richer use of yours than you.
 He is indeed a freeman. Free by birth
 Of no mean city, planned or ere the hills
 Were built, the fountains opened, or the sea 765
 With all his roaring multitude of waves.
 His freedom is the same in every state,
 And no condition of this changeful life,
 So manifold in cares, whose every day
 Brings its own evil with it, makes it less; 770
 For he has wings that neither sickness, pain,
 Nor penury, can cripple or confine.
 No nook so narrow but he spreads them there
 With ease, and is at large. The oppressor holds

His body bound, but knows not what a range
 His spirit takes, unconscious of a chain;
 And that to bind him is a vain attempt,
 Whom God delights in, and in whom He dwells.

Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldest taste
 His works. Admitted once to his embrace, 780
 Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before:
 Thine eye shall be instructed, and thine heart
 Made pure, shall relish with divine delight
 'Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.

Brutes graze the mountain-top, with faces prone, 785
 And eyes intent upon the scanty herb
 It yields them, or recumbent on its brow,
 Ruminant heedless of the scene outspread
 Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away
 From inland regions to the distant main.

Man views it and admires, but rests content
 With what he views. The landscape has his praise,
 But not its Author. Unconcerned who formed
 The Paradise he sees, he finds it such,
 And such well pleased to find it, asks no more.

Not so the mind that has been touched from Heaven,
 And in the school of sacred wisdom taught
 To read his wonders, in whose thought the world,
 Fair as it is, existed ere it was.

Not for its own sake merely, but for his
 Much more who fashioned it, he gives it praise;
 Praise that from earth resulting, as it ought,
 To earth's acknowledged Sovereign, finds at once
 Its only just proprietor in him.

The soul that sees him, or receives sublimed
 New faculties, or learns at least to employ
 More worthily the powers she owned before,
 Discerns in all things what, with stupid gaze
 Of ignorance, till then she overlooked,
 A ray of heavenly light gilding all forms
 Terrestrial, in the vast and the minute
 The unambiguous footsteps of the God

775

780

785

790

795

800

805

810

Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
 And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.
 Much conversant with Heaven, she often holds 815
 With those fair ministers of light to man,
 That fill the skies nightly with silent pomp,
 Sweet conference; inquires what strains were they
 With which Heaven rang, when every star, in haste
 To gratulate the new-created earth, 820
 Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God
 Shouted for joy.—‘Tell me, ye shining hosts
 ‘That navigate a sea that knows no storms,
 ‘Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud,
 ‘If from your elevation, whence ye view 825
 ‘Distinctly scenes invisible to man,
 ‘And systems of whose birth no tidings yet
 ‘Have reached this nether world, ye spy a race
 ‘Favoured as ours, transgressors from the womb,
 ‘And hasting to a grave, yet doomed to rise, 830
 ‘And to possess a brighter Heaven than yours?
 ‘As one who long detained on foreign shores
 ‘Pants to return, and when he sees afar
 ‘His country's weather-bleached and battered rocks
 ‘From the green wave emerging, darts an eye 835
 ‘Radiant with joy towards the happy land,
 ‘So I with animated hopes behold,
 ‘And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,
 ‘That show like beacons in the blue abyss,
 ‘Ordained to guide the embodied spirit home 840
 ‘From toilsome life to never ending rest.
 ‘Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires
 ‘That give assurance of their own success,
 ‘And that, infused from Heaven, must thither tend.’
 So reads he Nature, whom the lamp of truth 845
 Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious Word!
 Which whoso sees no longer wanders lost,
 With intellects bemazed in endless doubt,
 But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast built
 With means that were not till by thee employed, 850

Worlds that had never been hadst Thou in strength
Been less, or less benevolent than strong.

They are thy witnesses, who speak thy power
And goodness infinite, but speak in ears
That hear not, or receive not their report.

855

In vain thy creatures testify of thee,
Till Thou proclaim thyself. Theirs is indeed
A teaching voice; but 'tis the praise of thine
That whom it teaches it makes prompt to learn,
And with the boon gives talents for its use.

860

Till Thou art heard, imaginations vain
Possess the heart, and fables false as hell
Yet deemed oracular, lure down to death
The uninformed and heedless souls of men.

We give to Chance, blind Chance, ourselves as blind, 865
The glory of thy work, which yet appears
Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,
Challenging human scrutiny, and proved
Then skilful most when most severely judged.

But Chance is not; or is not where Thou reignest: 870
Thy Providence forbids that fickle power
(If power she be that works but to confound)

To mix her wild vagaries with thy laws.
Yet thus we dote, refusing while we can
Instruction, and inventing to ourselves
Gods such as guilt makes welcome; gods that sleep,

875

Or disregard our follies, or that sit
Amused spectators of this bustling stage.

Thee we reject, unable to abide
Thy purity, till pure as Thou art pure,

880

Made such by thee, we love thee for that cause
For which we shunned and hated thee before.

Then we are free. Then Liberty like day
Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from Heaven
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.

885

A voice is heard that mortal ears hear not
Till Thou hast touched them; 'tis the voice of song,
A loud Hosanna sent from all thy works,

Which he that hears it with a shout repeats,
And adds his rapture to the general praise. 890

In that blest moment, Nature throwing wide
Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile
The Author of her beauties, who, retired
Behind his own creation, works unseen
By the impure, and hears his power denied.

Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, Eternal Word !

From thee departing, they are lost, and rove
At random, without honour, hope, or peace.

From thee is all that soothes the life of man,
His high endeavour, and his glad success,
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve. 900

But, O Thou bounteous giver of all good !

Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown ;

Give what Thou canst, without thee we are poor, 905

And with thee rich, take what Thou wilt away.

BOOK VI.

THE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

ARGUMENT:—Bells at a distance, 1—Their effect, 6—A fine noon in winter, 57—A sheltered walk, 72—Meditation better than books, 84—Our familiarity with the course of nature makes it appear less wonderful than it is, 118—The transformation that spring effects in a shrubbery described, 140—A mistake concerning the course of nature corrected, 198—God maintains it by an unremitting act, 221—The amusements fashionable at this hour of the day reproved, 262—Animals happy, a delightful sight, 321—Origin of cruelty to animals, 348—That it is a great crime, proved from Scripture, 459—That proof illustrated by a tale, 483—A line drawn between the lawful and unlawful destruction of them, 560—Their good and useful properties insisted on, 601—Apology for the encomiums bestowed by the author on animals, 621—Instances of man's extravagant praise of man, 632—The groans of the creation shall have an end, 729—A view taken of the restoration of all things, 747—An invocation and an invitation of Him who shall bring it to pass, 818—The retired man vindicated from the charge of uselessness, 906—Conclusion, 995.

THERE is in souls a sympathy with sounds,
And as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased
With melting airs or martial, brisk or grave:
Some chord in unison with what we hear
Is touched within us, and the heart replies. 5
How soft the music of those village bells,
Falling at intervals upon the ear
In cadence sweet, now dying all away,
Now pealing loud again, and louder still,
Clear and sonorous, as the gale comes on! 10
With easy force it opens all the cells
Where Memory slept. Wherever I have heard

A kindred melody, the scene recurs,
 And with it all its pleasures and its pains.
 Such comprehensive views the spirit takes, 15
 That in a few short moments I retrace
 (As in a map the voyager his course)
 The windings of my way through many years.
 Short as in retrospect the journey seems,
 It seemed not always short; the rugged path, 20
 And prospect oft so dreary and forlorn,
 Moved many a sigh at its disheartening length.
 Yet feeling present evils, while the past
 Faintly impress the mind, or not at all,
 How readily we wish time spent revoked, 25
 That we might try the ground again, where once
 (Through inexperience, as we now perceive,)
 We missed that happiness we might have found!
 Some friend is gone, perhaps his son's best friend,
 A father, whose authority, in show 30
 When most severe, and mustering all its force,
 Was but the graver countenance of love;
 Whose favour, like the clouds of spring, might lower,
 And utter now and then an awful voice,
 But had a blessing in its darkest frown, 35
 Threatening at once and nourishing the plant.
 We loved, but not enough, the gentle hand
 That reared us. At a thoughtless age, allured
 By every gilded folly, we renounced
 His sheltering side, and wilfully forewent 40
 That converse which we now in vain regret.
 How gladly would the man recall to life
 The boy's neglected sire! a mother too,
 That softer friend, perhaps more gladly still,
 Might he demand them at the gates of death. 45
 Sorrow has, since they went, subdued and tamed
 The playful humour; he could now endure
 (Himself grown sober in the vale of tears)
 And feel a parent's presence no restraint.
 But not to understand a treasure's worth 50

Till time has stolen away the slighted good,
 Is cause of half the poverty we feel,
 And makes the world the wilderness it is.
 The few that pray at all pray oft amiss,
 And seeking grace to improve the prize they hold, 55
 Would urge a wiser suit than asking more.

The night was winter in his roughest mood;
 The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon
 Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
 And where the woods fence off the northern blast 60
 The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
 And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
 Without a cloud, and white without a speck
 The dazzling splendour of the scene below.
 Again the harmony comes o'er the vale, 65
 And through the trees I view the embattled tower
 Whence all the music. I again perceive
 The soothing influence of the wafted strains,
 And settled in soft musings as I tread
 The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms, 70
 Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.
 The roof, though moveable through all its length
 As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed,
 And intercepting in their silent fall
 The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me. 75
 No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.
 The redbreast warbles still, but is content
 With slender notes, and more than half suppressed:
 Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light
 From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes 80
 From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,
 That tinkle in the withered leaves below.
 Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,
 Charms more than silence. Meditation here
 May think down hours to moments. Here the heart 85
 May give a useful lesson to the head,
 And Learning wiser grow without his books.
 Knowledge and Wisdom, far from being one,

Have oftentimes no connexion. Knowledge dwells
 In heads replete with thoughts of other men, 90
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
 Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
 The mere materials with which Wisdom builds,
 Till smoothed and squared and fitted to its place,
 Does but encumber whom it seems to enrich. 95
 Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much,
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.
 Books are not seldom talismans and spells,
 By which the magic art of shrewder wits
 Holds an unthinking multitude enthralled. 100
 Some to the fascination of a name
 Surrender judgment hoodwinked. Some the style
 Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds
 Of error, leads them by a tune entranced.
 While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear 105
 The insupportable fatigue of thought,
 And swallowing therefore without pause or choice
 The total grist unsifted, husks and all.
 But trees, and rivulets whose rapid course
 Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer, 110
 And sheepwalks populous with bleating lambs,
 And lanes in which the primrose ere her time
 Peeps through the moss that clothes the hawthorn root,
 Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and Truth,
 Not shy as in the world, and to be won 115
 By slow solicitation, seize at once
 The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.
 What prodigies can power divine perform
 More grand than it produces year by year,
 And all in sight of inattentive man? 120
 Familiar with the effect we slight the cause,
 And in the constancy of Nature's course,
 The regular return of genial months,
 And renovation of a faded world,
 See naught to wonder at. Should God again, 125
 As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race

Of the undeviating and punctual sun,
 How would the world admire! But speaks it less
 An agency divine, to make him know
 His moment when to sink and when to rise,
 Age after age, than to arrest his course?
 All we behold is miracle, but seen
 So duly, all is miracle in vain.

Where now the vital energy that moved,
 While summer was, the pure and subtle lymph
 Through the imperceptible meandering veins
 Of leaf and flower? It sleeps; and the icy touch
 Of unprolific winter has impressed
 A cold stagnation on the intestine tide.

But let the months go round, a few short months,
 And all shall be restored. These naked shoots,
 Barren as lances, among which the wind
 Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes,
 Shall put their graceful foliage on again,
 And more aspiring, and with ampler spread,
 Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost.

Then each in its peculiar honours clad,
 Shall publish, even to the distant eye,
 Its family and tribe. Laburnum, rich
 In streaming gold; Syringa, ivory pure;

The scentless and the scented Rose, this red,
 And of an humbler growth, the other tall,
 And throwing up into the darkest gloom

Of neighbouring Cypress, or more sable Yew,
 Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf,
 That the wind severs from the broken wave;

The Lilac, various in array, now white,
 Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set
 With purple spikes pyramidal, as if
 Studious of ornament, yet unresolved

Which hue she most approved, she chose them all;
 Copious of flowers the Woodbine, pale and wan,
 But well compensating her sickly looks
 With never cloying odours, early and late;

130

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160

Hypericum all bloom, so thick a swarm 165
 Of flowers, like flies clothing her slender rods,
 That scarce a leaf appears; Mezereon too,
 Though leafless, well attired, and thick beset
 With blushing wreaths, investing every spray;
 Althaea with the purple eye; the Broom, 170
 Yellow and bright, as bullion unalloyed,
 Her blossoms; and luxuriant above all
 The Jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,
 The deep dark green of whose unvarnished leaf
 Makes more conspicuous, and illumines more 175
 The bright profusion of her scattered stars.—
 These have been, and these shall be in their day;
 And all this uniform uncoloured scene
 Shall be dismantled of its fleecy load,
 And flush into variety again. 180

From dearth to plenty, and from death to life,
 Is Nature's progress, when she lectures man
 In heavenly truth; evincing as she makes
 The grand transition, that there lives and works 185
 A soul in all things, and that soul is God.

The beauties of the wilderness are his,
 That make so gay the solitary place,
 Where no eye sees them. And the fairer forms
 That cultivation glories in, are his.

He sets the bright procession on its way, 190
 And marshals all the order of the year;
 He marks the bounds which Winter may not pass,
 And blunts his pointed fury; in its case,
 Russet and rude, folds up the tender germ
 Uninjured, with inimitable art; 195

And ere one flowery season fades and dies,]
 Designs the blooming wonders of the next.]

Some say that in the origin of things,
 When all creation started into birth,
 The infant elements received a law 200
 From which they swerve not since. That under force
 Of that controlling ordinance they move,

And need not his immediate hand, who first
 Prescribed their course, to regulate it now.
 Thus dream they, and contrive to save a God
 The incumbrance of his own concerns, and spare
 The Great Artificer of all that moves
 The stress of a continual act, the pain
 Of unremitting vigilance and care,
 As too laborious and severe a task.

205

So man, the moth, is not afraid, it seems,
 To span Omnipotence, and measure might
 That knows no measure, by the scanty rule
 And standard of his own, that is to-day,
 And is not ere to-morrow's sun go down.

210

But how should matter occupy a charge,
 Dull as it is, and satisfy a law
 So vast in its demands, unless impelled
 To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,
 And under pressure of some conscious cause?
 The Lord of all, himself through all diffused,
 Sustains and is the life of all that lives.

215

Nature is but a name for an effect,
 Whose cause is God. He feeds the secret fire
 By which the mighty process is maintained,
 Who sleeps not, is not weary; in whose sight
 Slow-circling ages are as transient days;
 Whose work is without labour; whose designs
 No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts;
 And whose beneficence no charge exhausts.

220

Him blind antiquity profaned, not served,
 With self-taught rites, and under various names,
 Female and male, Pomona, Pales, Pan,
 And Flora, and Vertumnus; peopling earth
 With tutelary goddesses and gods

225

That were not; and commanding as they would
 To each some province, garden, field, or grove.
 But all are under One. One Spirit—His
 Who bore the platted thorns with bleeding brows,
 Rules universal nature. Not a flower

235

240

But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,
 Of his unrivalled pencil. He inspires
 Their balmy odours, and imparts their hues,
 And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes
 In grains as countless as the seaside sands,
 The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.
 Happy who walks with him! whom what he finds
 Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flower,
 Or what he views of beautiful or grand
 In nature, from the broad majestic oak

245

To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,
 Prompts with remembrance of a present God.
 His presence, who made all so fair, perceived,
 Makes all still fairer. As with him no scene
 Is dreary, so with him all seasons please.

255

Though winter had been none, had man been true,
 And earth be punished for its tenant's sake,
 Yet not in vengeance; as this smiling sky,
 So soon succeeding such an angry night,
 And these dissolving snows, and this clear stream.
 Recovering fast its liquid music, prove.

260

Who then that has a mind well strung and tuned
 To contemplation, and within his reach
 A scene so friendly to his favourite task,
 Would waste attention at the chequered board,
 His host of wooden warriors to and fro
 Marching and countermarching, with an eye
 As fixed as marble, with a forehead ridged
 And furrowed into storms, and with a hand
 Trembling, as if eternity were hung
 In balance on his conduct of a pin?
 Nor envies he aught more their idle sport,
 Who pant with application misapplied
 To trivial toys, and pushing ivory balls
 Across a velvet level, feel a joy
 Akin to rapture, when the bauble finds
 Its destined goal of difficult access.
 Nor deems he wiser him who gives his noon

265

270

275

To miss, the mercer's plague, from shop to shop
Wandering, and littering with unfolded silks

280

The polished counter, and approving none,
Or promising with smiles to call again.

Nor him who, by his vanity seduced,
And soothed into a dream that he discerns
The difference of a Guido from a daub,

285

Frequents the crowded auction. Stationed there
As duly as the Langford of the show,
With glass at eye, and catalogue in hand,
And tongue accomplished in the fulsome cant
And pedantry that coxcombs learn with ease,
Oft as the price-deciding hammer falls,
He notes it in his book, then raps his box,
Swears 'tis a bargain, rails at his hard fate
That he has let it pass—but never bids.

290

Here unmolested, through whatever sign
The sun proceeds, I wander. Neither mist,
Nor freezing sky nor sultry, checking me,
Nor stranger intermeddling with my joy.

295

Even in the spring and play-time of the year,
That calls the unwonted villager abroad

300

With all her little ones, a sportive train,
To gather king-cups in the yellow mead,
And prink their hair with daisies, or to pick

A cheap but wholesome salad from the brook,
These shades are all my own. The timorous hare,

305

Grown so familiar with her frequent guest,
Scarce shuns me; and the stock dove unalarmed
Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor suspends
His long love-ditty for my near approach.

Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm,
That age or injury has hollowed deep,

310

Where on his bed of wool and matted leaves
He has outspent the winter, ventures forth
To frisk awhile, and bask in the warm sun,

The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play.

315

He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,

Ascends the neighbouring beech; there whisks his brush,
 And perks his ears, and stamps, and scolds aloud,
 With all the prettiness of feigned alarm,
 And anger insignificantly fierce.

320

The heart is hard in nature, and unfit
 For human fellowship, as being void
 Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike
 To love and friendship both, that is not pleased
 With sight of animals enjoying life,

325

Nor feels their happiness augment his own.

The bounding fawn that darts across the glade
 When none pursues, through mere delight of heart,
 And spirits buoyant with excess of glee;
 The horse, as wanton and almost as fleet,
 That skims the spacious meadow at full speed,

330

Then stops and snorts, and throwing high his heels,
 Starts to the voluntary race again;

The very kine that gambol at high noon,

The total herd receiving first from one

335

That leads the dance a summons to be gay,
 Though wild their strange vagaries, and uncouth
 Their efforts, yet resolved with one consent
 To give such act and utterance as they may

To ecstasy too big to be suppressed—

340

These, and a thousand images of bliss,

With which kind Nature graces every scene

Where cruel man defeats not her design,

Impart to the benevolent, who wish

All that are capable of pleasure, pleased,

345

A far superior happiness to theirs,

The comfort of a reasonable joy.

Man scarce had risen, obedient to his call

Who formed him from the dust, his future grave,

When he was crowned as never king was since.

350

God set the diadem upon his head,

And angel choirs attended. Wondering stood

The new-made monarch, while before him passed,

All happy and all perfect in their kind,

The creatures, summoned from their various haunts 355
 To see their sovereign, and confess his sway.
 Vast was his empire, absolute his power,
 Or bounded only by a law whose force
 'Twas his sublimest privilege to feel
 And own, the law of universal love. 360
 He ruled with meekness, they obeyed with joy;
 No cruel purpose lurked within his heart,
 And no distrust of his intent in theirs.
 So Eden was a scene of harmless sport,
 Where kindness on his part who ruled the whole, 365
 Begat a tranquil confidence in all,
 And fear as yet was not, nor cause for fear.
 But sin marred all; and the revolt of man,
 That source of evils not exhausted yet,
 Was punished with revolt of his from him. 370
 Garden of God, how terrible the change
 Thy groves and lawns then witnessed! Every heart,
 Each animal of every name, conceived
 A jealousy and an instinctive fear,
 And conscious of some danger, either fled 375
 Precipitate the loathed abode of man,
 Or growled defiance in such angry sort,
 As taught him too to tremble in his turn.
 Thus harmony and family accord
 Were driven from Paradise; and in that hour 380
 The seeds of cruelty, that since have swelled
 To such gigantic and enormous growth,
 Were sown in human nature's fruitful soil.
 Hence date the persecution and the pain
 That man inflicts on all inferior kinds, 385
 Regardless of their plaints. To make him sport,
 To gratify the frenzy of his wrath,
 Or his base gluttony, are causes good
 And just in his account, why bird and beast
 Should suffer torture, and the streams be dyed
 With blood of their inhabitants impaled. 390
 Earth groans beneath the burden of a war

Waged with defenceless innocence, while he,
 Not satisfied to prey on all around,
 Adds tenfold bitterness to death by pangs
 Needless, and first torments ere he devours. 395
 Now happiest they that occupy the scenes
 The most remote from his abhorred resort,
 Whom once, as delegate of God on earth,
 They feared, and as his perfect image loved. 400
 The wilderness is theirs, with all its caves,
 Its hollow glens, its thickets, and its plains
 Unvisited by man. There they are free,
 And howl and roar as likes them, uncontrolled,
 Nor ask his leave to slumber or to play. 405
 Woe to the tyrant, if he dare intrude
 Within the confines of their wild domain:
 The lion tells him—‘I am monarch here!’
 And if he spare him, spares him on the terms
 Of royal mercy, and through generous scorn 410
 To rend a victim trembling at his foot.
 In measure, as by force of instinct drawn,
 Or by necessity constrained, they live
 Dependent upon man; those in his fields,
 These at his crib, and some beneath his roof. 415
 They prove too often at how dear a rate
 He sells protection. Witness, at his foot
 The spaniel dying for some venial fault,
 Under dissection of the knotted scourge;
 Witness the patient ox, with stripes and yells 420
 Driven to the slaughter, goaded, as he runs,
 To madness, while the savage at his heels
 Laughs at the frantic sufferer’s fury, spent
 Upon the guiltless passenger o’erthrown.
 He too is witness, noblest of the train 425
 That wait on man, the flight-performing horse:
 With unsuspecting readiness he takes
 His murderer on his back, and pushed all day,
 With bleeding sides and flanks that heave for life,
 To the far-distant goal, arrives and dies. 430

So little mercy shows who needs so much!
 Does law, so jealous in the cause of man,
 Denounce no doom on the delinquent? None.
 He lives, and o'er his brimming beaker boasts
 (As if barbarity were high desert)

435

The inglorious feat, and clamorous in praise
 Of the poor brute, seems wisely to suppose
 The honours of his matchless horse his own.
 But many a crime deemed innocent on earth
 Is registered in Heaven; and these no doubt
 Have each their record, with a curse annexed.
 Man may dismiss compassion from his heart,
 But God will never. When He charged the Jew
 To assist his foe's down-fallen beast to rise;
 And when the bush-exploring boy that seized
 The young, to let the parent bird go free;

440

Proved He not plainly that his meaner works
 Are yet his care, and have an interest all,
 All, in the universal Father's love?

445

On Noah, and in him on all mankind,
 The charter was conferred, by which we hold
 The flesh of animals in fee, and claim
 O'er all we feed on, power of life and death.
 But read the instrument, and mark it well:
 The oppression of a tyrannous control
 Can find no warrant there. Feed then, and yield
 Thanks for thy food. Carnivorous through sin,
 Feed on the slain, but spare the living brute.

455

The Governor of all, himself to all
 So bountiful, in whose attentive ear
 The unfledged raven and the lion's whelp
 Plead not in vain for pity on the pangs
 Of hunger unassuaged, has interposed,
 Not seldom, his avenging arm, to smite
 The injurious trampler upon Nature's law,
 That claims forbearance even for a brute.
 He hates the hardness of a Balaam's heart;
 And prophet as he was, he might not strike

460

465

The blameless animal, without rebuke,
 On which he rode. Her opportune offence
 Saved him, or the unrelenting seer had died. 470

He sees that human equity is slack
 To interfere, though in so just a cause,
 And makes the task his own. Inspiring dumb
 And helpless victims with a sense so keen
 Of injury, with such knowledge of their strength, 475
 And such sagacity to take revenge,
 That oft the beast has seemed to judge the man.

An ancient, not a legendary tale,
 By one of sound intelligence rehearsed
 (If such who plead for Providence may seem
 In modern eyes), shall make the doctrine clear. 480

Where England, stretched towards the setting sun,
 Narrow and long, o'erlooks the western wave,
 Dwelt young Misagathus; a scorner he
 Of God and goodness, atheist in ostent, 485
 Vicious in act, in temper savage-fierce.
 He journeyed; and his chance was as he went
 To join a traveller, of far different note,
 Evander, famed for piety, for years
 Deserving honour, but for wisdom more. 490

Fame had not left the venerable man
 A stranger to the manners of the youth,
 Whose face too was familiar to his view.
 Their way was on the margin of the land, 495
 O'er the green summit of the rocks, whose base
 Beats back the roaring surge, scarce heard so high.
 The charity that warmed his heart was moved
 At sight of the man-monster. With a smile
 Gentle, and affable, and full of grace, 500
 As fearful of offending whom he wished
 Much to persuade, he plied his ear with truths
 Not harshly thundered forth, or rudely pressed,
 But like his purpose, gracious, kind, and sweet.
 'And dost thou dream,' the impenetrable man
 Exclaimed, 'that me, the lullabies of age, 505

And fantasies of dotards, such as thou,
 Can cheat, or move a moment's fear in me?
 Mark now the proof I give thee, that the brave
 Need no such aids as Superstition lends,
 To steel their hearts against the dread of Death.' 510
 He spoke, and to the precipice at hand
 Pushed with a madman's fury. Fancy shrinks,
 And the blood thrills and curdles at the thought
 Of such a gulf as he designed his grave.

But though the felon on his back could dare
 The dreadful leap, more rational his steed
 Declined the death, and wheeling swiftly round,
 Or ere his hoof had pressed the crumbling verge,
 Baffled his rider, saved against his will. 515

The frenzy of the brain may be redressed
 By medicine well applied, but without grace
 The heart's insanity admits no cure.

✓ Enraged the more by what might have reformed
 His horrible intent, again he sought
 Destruction, with a zeal to be destroyed,
 With sounding whip, and rowels dyed in blood.
 But still in vain. The Providence that meant
 A longer date to the far nobler beast,
 Spared yet again the ignobler for his sake. 525

And now, his prowess proved, and his sincere
 Incurable obduracy evinced,
 His rage grew cool; and pleased perhaps to have earned
 So cheaply the renown of that attempt,

With looks of some complacence he resumed
 His road, deriding much the blank amaze
 Of good Evander, still where he was left
 Fixed motionless, and petrified with dread. 535

↗ So on they fared. Discourse on other themes
 Ensuing seemed to obliterate the past,
 And tamer far for so much fury shown,
 (As is the course of rash and fiery men)
 The rude companion smiled, as if transformed.
 But 'twas a transient calm. A storm was near,

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An unsuspected storm. His hour was come. 545
 The impious challenger of power divine
 Was now to learn that Heaven, though slow to wrath,
 Is never with impunity defied.
 His horse, as he had caught his master's mood,
 Snorting, and starting into sudden rage, 550
 Unbidden, and not now to be controlled,
 Rushed to the cliff, and having reached it, stood.
 At once the shock unseated him: he flew
 Sheer o'er the craggy barrier, and immersed
 Deep in the flood, found, when he sought it not, 555
 The death he had deserved, and died alone.
 So God wrought double justice; made the fool
 The victim of his own tremendous choice,
 And taught a brute the way to safe revenge.

I would not enter on my list of friends 560
 (Though graced with polished manners and fine sense,
 Yet wanting sensibility) the man
 Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.
 An inadvertent step may crush the snail
 That crawls at evening in the public path; 565
 But he that has humanity, forewarned,
 Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.
 The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,
 And charged perhaps with venom, that intrudes,
 A visitor unwelcome, into scenes 570
 Sacred to neatness and repose, the alcove,
 The chamber, or refectory, may die:
 A necessary act incurs no blame.
 Not so, when, held within their proper bounds
 And guiltless of offence, they range the air, 575
 Or take their pastime in the spacious field:
 There they are privileged; and he that hunts
 Or harms them there, is guilty of a wrong,
 Disturbs the economy of Nature's realm,
 Who, when she formed, designed them an abode. 580
 The sum is this. If man's convenience, health,
 Or safety interfere, his rights and claims

Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs.
 Else they are all—the meanest things that are,
 As free to live, and to enjoy that life, 585
 As God was free to form them at the first,
 Who in his sovereign wisdom made them all.
 Ye, therefore, who love mercy, teach your sons
 To love it too. The spring-time of our years
 Is soon dishonoured and defiled in most 590
 By budding ills, that ask a prudent hand
 To check them. But, alas! none sooner shoots,
 If unrestrained, into luxuriant growth,
 Than cruelty, most devilish of them all.
 Mercy to him that shows it, is the rule 595
 And righteous limitation of its act,
 By which Heaven moves in pardoning guilty man;
 And he that shows none, being ripe in years,
 And conscious of the outrage he commits,
 Shall seek it, and not find it, in his turn. 600

Distinguished much by reason, and still more
 By our capacity of grace divine,
 From creatures that exist but for our sake,
 Which having served us, perish, we are held
 Accountable, and God, some future day, 605
 Will reckon with us roundly for the abuse
 Of what he deems no mean or trivial trust.
 Superior as we are, they yet depend
 Not more on human help, than we on theirs.
 Their strength, or speed, or vigilance, were given 610
 In aid of our defects. In some are found
 Such teachable and apprehensive parts,
 That man's attainments in his own concerns,
 Matched with the expertness of the brutes in theirs,
 Are oft-times vanquished and thrown far behind. 615
 Some show that nice sagacity of smell,
 And read with such discernment, in the port
 And figure of the man, his secret aim,
 That oft we owe our safety to a skill
 We could not teach, and must despair to learn. 620

But learn we might, if not too proud to stoop
 To quadruped instructors, many a good
 And useful quality, and virtue too,
 Rarely exemplified among ourselves.

Attachment never to be weaned or changed

625

By any change of fortune; proof alike
 Against unkindness, absence, and neglect;
 Fidelity that neither bribe nor threat
 Can move or warp; and gratitude for small
 And trivial favours, lasting as the life,
 And glistening even in the dying eye.

630

Man praises man. Desert in arts or arms
 Wins public honour; and ten thousand sit
 Patiently present at a sacred song,
 Commemoration-mad; content to hear
 (O wonderful effect of music's power!)
 Messiah's eulogy, for Handel's sake.

635

But less, methinks, than sacrilege might serve—
 (For was it less? What heathen would have dared
 To strip Jove's statue of his oaken wreath,
 And hang it up in honour of a man?)
 Much less might serve, when all that we design
 Is but to gratify an itching ear,
 And give the day to a musician's praise.

640

Remember Handel! Who that was not born
 Deaf as the dead to harmony, forgets,
 Or can, the more than Homer of his age?
 Yes—we remember him; and while we praise
 A talent so divine, remember too
 That his most holy book, from whom it came,
 Was never meant, was never used before,
 To buckram out the memory of a man.
 But hush!—the Muse perhaps is too severe,
 And with a gravity beyond the size
 And measure of the offence, rebukes a deed
 Less impious than absurd, and owing more
 To want of judgment than to wrong design.
 So in the chapel of old Ely House,

645

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When wandering Charles, who meant to be the third,
Had fled from William, and the news was fresh, 660
The simple clerk, but loyal, did announce
And eke did rear right merrily, two staves,
Sung to the praise and glory of king George!

Man praises man; and Garrick's memory next,
When time hath somewhat mellowed it, and made 665
The idol of our worship while he lived
The god of our idolatry once more,
Shall have its altar; and the world shall go
In pilgrimage to bow before his shrine.

The theatre, too small, shall suffocate 670
Its squeezed contents, and more than it admits
Shall sigh at their exclusion, and return
Ungratified. For there some noble lord
Shall stuff his shoulders with king Richard's bunch,
Or wrap himself in Hamlet's inky cloak, 675
And strut, and storm, and straddle, stamp, and stare,
To show the world how Garrick did not act.
For Garrick was a worshipper himself;
He drew the liturgy, and framed the rites
And solemn ceremonial of the day, 680
And called the world to worship on the banks
Of Avon, famed in song. Ah, pleasant proof
That piety has still in human hearts
Some place, a spark or two not yet extinct!
The mulberry-tree was hung with blooming wreaths; 685
The mulberry-tree stood centre of the dance;
The mulberry-tree was hymned with dulcet airs;
And from his touchwood trunk the mulberry-tree
Supplied such relics as devotion holds
Still sacred, and preserves with pious care. 690
So 'twas a hallowed time: decorum reigned,
And mirth without offence. No few returned,
Doubtless, much edified, and all refreshed.

Man praises man. The rabble all alive,
From tippling benches, cellars, stalls, and styes,
Swarm in the streets. The statesman of the day, 695

A pompous and slow-moving pageant, comes.
 Some shout him, and some hang upon his car,
 To gaze in his eyes, and bless him. Maidens wave
 Their kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy; 700
 While others, not so satisfied, unhorse
 The gilded equipage, and turning loose
 His steeds, usurp a place they well deserve.
 Why? What has charmed them? Hath he saved the state?
 No. Doth he purpose its salvation? No. 705
 Enchanting novelty, that moon at full
 That finds out every crevice of the head
 That is not sound and perfect, hath in theirs
 Wrought this disturbance. But the wane is near,
 And his own cattle must suffice him soon. 710
 Thus idly do we waste the breath of praise,
 And dedicate a tribute, in its use
 And just direction sacred, to a thing
 Doomed to the dust, or lodged already there.
 Encomium in old time was poet's work; 715
 But poets having lavishly long since
 Exhausted all materials of the art,
 The task now falls into the public hand;
 And I, contented with an humble theme,
 Have poured my stream of panegyric down 720
 The vale of Nature, where it creeps and winds
 Among her lovely works, with a secure
 And unambitious course, reflecting clear,
 If not the virtues, yet the worth of brutes.
 And I am recompensed, and deem the toils 725
 Of poetry not lost, if verse of mine
 May stand between an animal and woe,
 And teach one tyrant pity for his drudge.
 The groans of Nature in this nether world,
 Which Heaven has heard for ages, have an end. 730
 Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,
 Whose fire was kindled at the prophets' lamp,
 The time of rest, the promised Sabbath, comes.
 Six thousand years of sorrow have well nigh

Fulfilled their tardy and disastrous course
 Over a sinful world; and what remains
 Of this tempestuous state of human things,
 Is merely as the working of a sea
 Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest:
 For He, whose car the winds are, and the clouds
 The dust that waits upon his sultry march,
 When sin hath moved him, and his wrath is hot,
 Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend
 Propitious in his chariot paved with love;
 And what his storms have blasted and defaced
 For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.

735

Sweet is the harp of prophecy; too sweet
 Not to be wronged by a mere mortal touch:
 Nor can the wonders it records be sung
 To meaner music, and not suffer loss.
 But when a poet, or when one like me,
 Happy to rove among poetic flowers
 Though poor in skill to rear them, lights at last
 On some fair theme, some theme divinely fair,
 Such is the impulse and the spur he feels
 To give it praise proportioned to its worth,
 That not to attempt it, arduous as he deems
 The labour, were a task more arduous still.

740

O scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,
 Scenes of accomplished bliss! which who can see,
 Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
 His soul refreshed with foretaste of the joy?
 Rivers of gladness water all the earth,
 And clothe all climes with beauty. The reproach
 Of barrenness is passed. The fruitful field
 Laughs with abundance, and the land, once lean,
 Or fertile only in its own disgrace,
 Exults to see its thistly curse repealed.
 The various seasons woven into one,
 And that one season an eternal spring,
 The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,
 For there is none to covet, all are full.

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The lion, and the libbard, and the bear
 Graze with the fearless flocks; all bask at noon
 Together, or all gambol in the shade 775
 Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.

Antipathies are none. No foe to man
 Lurks in the serpent now: the mother sees,
 And smiles to see, her infant's playful hand
 Stretched forth to dally with the crested worm, 780
 To stroke his azure neck, or to receive
 The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.

All creatures worship man, and all mankind,
 One Lord, one Father. Error has no place;
 That creeping pestilence is driven away; 785
 The breath of Heaven has chased it. In the heart
 No passion touches a discordant string,
 But all is harmony and love. Disease
 Is not. The pure and uncontaminate blood
 Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age. 790
 One song employs all nations, and all cry,
 'Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!'
 The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
 Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
 From distant mountains catch the flying joy, 795
 Till nation after nation taught the strain,
 Earth rolls the rapturous Hosanna round.
 Behold the measure of the promise filled;
 See Salem built, the labour of a God!
 Bright as a sun the sacred city shines; 800
 All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
 Flock to that light; the glory of all lands
 Flows into her; unbounded is her joy,
 And endless her increase. Thy rams are there,
 Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar there; 805
 The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,
 And Saba's spicy groves pay tribute there.
 Praise is in all her gates: upon her walls,
 And in her streets, and in her spacious courts,
 Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there 810

Kneels with the native of the farthest west;
 And Æthiopia spreads abroad the hand,
 And worships. Her report has travelled forth
 Into all lands. From every clime they come
 To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy,
 O Sion! an assembly such as earth
 Saw never, such as Heaven stoops down to see.

815

Thus Heavenward all things tend. For all were once
 Perfect, and all must be at length restored.

So God has greatly purposed; who would else
 820

In his dishonoured works himself endure

Dishonour, and be wronged without redress.

Haste, then, and wheel away a shattered world,
 Ye slow-revolving seasons! We would see

(A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet) 825

A world that does not dread and hate his laws,

And suffer for its crime; would learn how fair

The creature is that God pronounces good,

How pleasant in itself what pleases him.

Here every drop of honey hides a sting,

830

Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flowers,

And even the joy that haply some poor heart

Derives from Heaven, pure as the fountain is,

Is sullied in the stream, taking a taint

From touch of human lips, at best impure.

835

Oh for a world in principle as chaste

As this is gross and selfish! over which

Custom and Prejudice shall bear no sway,

That govern all things here, shouldering aside

The meek and modest Truth, and forcing her

840

To seek a refuge from the tongue of Strife

In nooks obscure, far from the ways of men:

Where Violence shall never lift the sword,

Nor Cunning justify the proud man's wrong,

Leaving the poor no remedy but tears:

845

Where he that fills an office, shall esteem

The occasion it presents of doing good

More than the perquisite: where Law shall speak

Seldom, and never but as Wisdom prompts
 And Equity; not jealous more to guard
 A worthless form, than to decide aright: 850
 Where Fashion shall not sanctify abuse,
 Nor smooth Good-breeding (supplemental grace)
 With lean performance ape the work of Love.

Come then, and added to thy many crowns,
 Receive yet one, the crown of all the Earth,
 Thou who alone art worthy! It was thine
 By ancient covenant ere Nature's birth,
 And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,
 And overpaid its value with thy blood. 855
 Thy saints proclaim thee king; and in their hearts
 Thy title is engraven with a pen
 Dipped in the fountain of eternal love.
 Thy saints proclaim thee king; and thy delay
 Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see 860
 The dawn of thy last advent, long-desired,
 Would creep into the bowels of the hills,
 And flee for safety to the falling rocks.
 The very spirit of the world is tired
 Of its own taunting question, asked so long,
 'Where is the promise of your Lord's approach?' 865
 The infidel has shot his bolts away,
 Till his exhausted quiver yielding none,
 He gleans the blunted shafts that have recoiled,
 And aims them at the shield of Truth again.
 The veil is rent, rent too by priestly hands, 870
 That hides divinity from mortal eyes;
 And all the mysteries to faith proposed,
 Insulted and traduced, are cast aside
 As useless, to the moles and to the bats.
 They now are deemed the faithful, and are praised,
 Who, constant only in rejecting thee,
 Deny thy Godhead with a martyr's zeal,
 And quit their office for their error's sake.
 Blind and in love with darkness! yet even these 875
 Worthy, compared with sycophants, who knee

Thy name, adoring, and then preach thee man.
 So fares thy church. But how thy church may fare
 The world takes little thought. Who will may preach,
 And what they will. All pastors are alike 890
 To wandering sheep, resolved to follow none.
 Two gods divide them all—Pleasure and Gain.
 For these they live, they sacrifice to these,
 And in their service wage perpetual war
 With Conscience and with thee. Lust in their hearts, 895
 And mischief in their hands, they roam the earth
 To prey upon each other: stubborn, fierce,
 High-minded, foaming out their own disgrace.
 Thy prophets speak of such; and, noting down
 The features of the last degenerate times, 900
 Exhibit every lineament of these.
 Come then, and added to thy many crowns,
 Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,
 Due to thy last and most effectual work,
 Thy word fulfilled, the conquest of a world! 905

He is the happy man, whose life even now
 Shows somewhat of that happier life to come;
 Who doomed to an obscure but tranquil state,
 Is pleased with it, and were he free to choose,
 Would make his fate his choice; whom Peace, the fruit 910
 Of virtue, and whom Virtue, fruit of faith,
 Prepare for happiness; bespeak him one
 Content indeed to sojourn while he must
 Below the skies, but having there his home.
 The World o'erlooks him in her busy search 915
 Of objects more illustrious in her view;
 And occupied as earnestly as she,
 Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the World.
 She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not;
 He seeks not hers, for he has proved them vain. 920
 He cannot skip the ground like summer birds
 Pursuing gilded flies, and such he deems
 Her honours, her emoluments, her joys.
 Therefore in Contemplation is his bliss,

Whose power is such, that whom she lifts from earth 925
 She makes familiar with a Heaven unseen,
 And shows him glories yet to be revealed.
 Not slothful he, though seeming unemployed, ✓
 And censured oft as useless. Stillest streams
 Oft water fairest meadows, and the bird
 That flutters least is longest on the wing. 930
 Ask him, indeed, what trophies he has raised,
 Or what achievements of immortal fame
 He purposes, and he shall answer—None.
 His warfare is within. There unfatigued
 His fervent spirit labours. There he fights, 935
 And there obtains fresh triumphs o'er himself,
 And never-withering wreaths, compared with which
 The laurels that a Cæsar reaps are weeds.
 Perhaps the self-approving haughty World,
 That as she sweeps him with her whistling silks 940
 Scarce deigns to notice him, or if she see,
 Deems him a cipher in the works of God,
 Receives advantage from his noiseless hours,
 Of which she little dreams. Perhaps she owes
 Her sunshine and her rain, her blooming spring 945
 And plenteous harvest, to the prayer he makes,
 When, Isaac like, the solitary saint
 Walks forth to meditate at eventide,
 And think on her, who thinks not for herself. 950
 Forgive him, then, thou bustler in concerns
 Of little worth, an idler in the best,
 If author of no mischief and some good,
 He seek his proper happiness by means
 That may advance, but cannot hinder, thine. 955
 Nor though he tread the secret path of life,
 Engage no notice, and enjoy much ease,
 Account him an encumbrance on the state,
 Receiving benefits, and rendering none.
 His sphere though humble, if that humble sphere
 Shine with his fair example, and though small 960
 His influence, if that influence all be spent

In soothing sorrow and in quenching strife,
 In aiding helpless indigence, in works
 From which at least a grateful few derive
Some taste of comfort in a world of woe; 965
 Then let the supercilious great confess
 He serves his country, recompenses well
 The state, beneath the shadow of whose vine
 He sits secure, and in the scale of life
 Holds no ignoble, though a slighted, place. 970
 The man whose virtues are more felt than seen,
 Must drop indeed the hope of public praise;
 But he may boast what few that win it can,
 That if his country stand not by his skill,
 At least his follies have not wrought her fall. 975
 Polite Refinement offers him in vain
 Her golden tube, through which a sensual World
 Draws gross impurity, and likes it well,
 The neat conveyance hiding all the offence. 980
 Not that he peevishly rejects a mode
 Because that World adopts it. If it bear
 The stamp and clear impression of good sense,
 And be not costly more than of true worth,
 He puts it on, and for decorum sake, 985
 Can wear it even as gracefully as she.
 She judges of refinement by the eye,
 He by the test of conscience, and a heart
 Not soon deceived; aware that what is base
 No polish can make sterling, and that Vice, 990
 Though well perfumed and elegantly dressed,
 Like an unburied carcass tricked with flowers,
 Is but a garnished nuisance, fitter far
 For cleanly riddance than for fair attire.
 So life glides smoothly and by stealth away, 995
 More golden than that Age of fabled Gold
 Renowned in ancient song; not vexed with care
 Or stained with guilt, beneficent, approved
 Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.
 So glide my life away! and so at last, 1000

My share of duties decently fulfilled,
May some disease, not tardy to perform
Its destined office, yet with gentle stroke,
Dismiss me weary to a safe retreat,
Beneath the turf that I have often trod. 1005

It shall not grieve me, then, that once, when called
To dress a Sofa with the flowers of verse,
I played awhile, obedient to the fair,
With that light task; but soon, to please her more,
Whom flowers alone I knew would little please, 1010

Let fall the unfinished wreath, and roved for fruit;
Roved far, and gathered much: some harsh, 'tis true,
Picked from the thorns and briars of reproof,
But wholesome, well-digested; grateful some
To palates that can taste immortal truth, 1015

Insipid else, and sure to be despised.
But all is in his hand whose praise I seek.
In vain the Poet sings, and the World hears,
If He regard not, though divine the theme. 1020

'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime
And idle tinkling of a minstrel's lyre,
To charm his ear, whose eye is on the heart,
Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,
Whose approbation prosper—even mine.

TIROCINIUM;

OR, A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS.

Κεφαλαιον δη παιδειας ορθη τροφη.—PLATO.

Αρχη πολιτειας απασης, νεων τροφα.—DIOG. LAERT.

[ARGUMENT:—Man's supremacy derived not from his outward form, but from the soul, 1—Creation in vain, unless subservient to the purposes of an immortal being, 35—Heavenly truth not difficult to discover, 73—Man made to discover and declare it, 100—Duty of making it known to the young, 103—Importance of infant instruction, 109—‘Pilgrim’s Progress,’ 131—Happy if such studies were approved in riper years, 147—The Gospel rejected for false philosophy, 185—Corrupting influence of large schools, 201—Effects of bad example on the young, 220—College, 240—Errors in education from following established precedent, 255—Teachers connive at vice in their pupils, 269—Degeneracy of schools, 279—Early school associations, 296—Parents recounting their early follies to their children, 318—Advancement in the world expected from school friendships, 393—These are not always permanent, 436—Is emulation a right motive of action? 458—Great and small schools alike, 515—Parental confidence and companionship, 537—This confidence destroyed by absence, 561—Classics not enough, 605—Study of Nature, 630—A private tutor recommended, 658—Danger of association with servants, 688—Tutors to be treated with respect, 706—Where home example is bad, board in some retired house recommended, 735—The author’s advice not likely to be followed, 779—The middle ranks warned against sending their sons to school, 807—Which should be managed better or encouraged less, 922.]

IT is not from his form, in which we trace
Strength joined with beauty, dignity with grace,
That man, the master of this globe, derives
His right of empire over all that lives.
That form, indeed, the associate of a mind

Vast in its powers, ethereal in its kind,—
 That form, the labour of Almighty skill,
 Framed for the service of a free-born will,
 Asserts precedence, and bespeaks control,
 But borrows all its grandeur from the soul.
 Hers is the state, the splendour, and the throne,
 An intellectual kingdom, all her own.

For her, the Memory fills her ample page
 With truths poured down from every distant age;

For her, amasses an unbounded store,
 The wisdom of great nations, now no more;
 Though laden, not encumbered with her spoil,
 Laborious, yet unconscious of her toil,
 When copiously supplied, then most enlarged,
 Still to be fed, and not to be surcharged.

For her the Fancy, roving unconfined,
 The present Muse of every pensive mind,
 Works magic wonders, adds a brighter hue
 To Nature's scenes, than Nature ever knew.

At her command winds rise and waters roar,
 Again she lays them slumbering on the shore;
 With flower and fruit the wilderness supplies,
 Or bids the rocks in ruder pomp arise.

For her the Judgment, umpire in the strife
 That Grace and Nature have to wage through life,
 Quick-sighted arbiter of good and ill,
 Appointed sage preceptor to the Will,
 Condemns, approves, and with a faithful voice
 Guides the decision of a doubtful choice.

Why did the fiat of a God give birth
 To yon fair Sun and his attendant Earth?
 And when descending he resigns the skies,
 Why takes the gentler Moon her turn to rise,
 Whom Ocean feels through all his countless waves,
 And owns her power on every shore he laves?
 Why do the seasons still enrich the year,
 Fruitful and young as in their first career?
 Spring hangs her infant blossoms on the trees,

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Rocked in the cradle of the western breeze;
 Summer in haste the thriving charge receives,
 Beneath the shade of her expanded leaves,
 Till Autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews
 Dye them at last in all their glowing hues.—
 'Twere wild profusion all, and bootless waste,
 Power misemployed, munificence misplaced,
 Had not its author dignified the plan,
 And crowned it with the majesty of man.
 Thus formed, thus placed, intelligent, and taught,
 Look where he will, the wonders God has wrought,
 The wildest scorner of his Maker's laws
 Finds in a sober moment time to pause,
 To press the important question on his heart,
 'Why formed at all, and wherefore as thou art?'
 If man be what he seems, this hour a slave,
 The next mere dust and ashes in the grave;
 Endued with reason only to descry
 His crimes and follies with an aching eye;
 With passions, just that he may prove, with pain,
 The force he spends against their fury vain;
 And if, soon after having burned, by turns,
 With every lust with which frail Nature burns,
 His being end where death dissolves the bond,
 The tomb take all, and all be blank beyond;
 Then he, of all that Nature has brought forth,
 Stands self-impeached the creature of least worth,
 And useless while he lives, and when he dies,
 Brings into doubt the wisdom of the skies.

Truths that the learned pursue with eager thought
 Are not important always as dear-bought,
 Proving at last, though told in pompous strains,
 A childish waste of philosophic pains;
 But truths on which depends our main concern,
 That 'tis our shame and misery not to learn,
 Shine by the side of every path we tread,
 With such a lustre he that runs may read.
 'Tis true that, if to trifle life away

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Down to the sunset of their latest day,
 Then perish on futurity's wide shore
 Like fleeting exhalations, found no more,
 Were all that Heaven required of human kind,
 And all the plan their destiny designed,
 What none could reverence all might justly blame,
 And man would breathe but for his Maker's shame.
 But Reason heard, and Nature well perused,
 At once the dreaming mind is disabused.

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If all we find possessing earth, sea, air,
 Reflect his attributes who placed them there,
 Fulfil the purpose, and appear designed
 Proofs of the wisdom of the all-seeing mind,
 'Tis plain the creature whom He chose to invest
 With kingship and dominion o'er the rest,
 Received his nobler nature, and was made
 Fit for the power in which he stands arrayed,
 That first or last, hereafter if not here,
 He too might make his author's wisdom clear,
 Praise him on earth, or obstinately dumb,
 Suffer his justice in a world to come.

90

95

This once believed, 'twere logic misapplied
 To prove a consequence by none denied,
 That we are bound to cast the minds of youth
 Betimes into the mould of heavenly truth,
 That taught of God they may indeed be wise,
 Nor ignorantly wandering miss the skies.

105

In early days the Conscience has in most
 A quickness, which in later life is lost:
 Preserved from guilt by salutary fears,
 Or, guilty, soon relenting into tears.

110

Too careless often, as our years proceed,
 What friends we sort with, or what books we read,
 Our parents yet exert a prudent care
 To feed our infant minds with proper fare,
 And wisely store the nursery by degrees
 With wholesome learning, yet acquired with ease.
 Neatly secured from being soiled or torn

115

Beneath a pane of thin translucent horn, 120
 A book (to please us at a tender age
 'Tis called a book, though but a single page)
 Presents the prayer the Saviour deigned to teach,
 Which children use, and parsons—when they preach.
 Lisping our syllables, we scramble next 125
 Through moral narrative, or sacred text,
 And learn with wonder how this world began,
 Who made, who marred, and who has ransomed man;
 Points, which, unless the Scripture made them plain,
 The wisest heads might agitate in vain. 130
 O thou, whom, borne on Fancy's eager wing
 Back to the season of life's happy spring,
 I pleased remember, and, while memory yet
 Holds fast her office here, can ne'er forget;
 Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale 135
 Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail;
 Whose humorous vein, strong sense, and simple style,
 May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile,
 Witty, and well-employed, and, like thy Lord,
 Speaking in parables his slighted word, 140
 I name thee not, lest so despised a name
 Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame,
 Yet even in transitory life's late day,
 That mingles all my brown with sober gray,
 Revere the man whose PILGRIM marks the road, 145
 And guides the PROGRESS of the soul to God.
 'Twere well with most, if books that could engage
 Their childhood, pleased them at a riper age;
 The man approving what had charmed the boy,
 Would die at last in comfort, peace, and joy, 150
 And not with curses on his art who stole
 The gem of truth from his unguarded soul.
 The stamp of artless piety impressed
 By kind tuition on his yielding breast,
 The youth now bearded, and yet pert and raw, 155
 Regards with scorn, though once received with awe,
 And warped into the labyrinth of lies,

That babblers, called philosophers, devise,
 Blasphemes his creed, as founded on a plan
 Replete with dreams, unworthy of a man.
 Touch but his nature in its ailing part,
 Assert the native evil of his heart,
 His pride resents the charge, although the proof
 Rise in his forehead, and seem rank enough :
 Point to the cure, describe a Saviour's cross
 As God's expedient to retrieve his loss,
 The young apostate sickens at the view,
 And hates it with the malice of a Jew.

How weak the barrier of mere Nature proves,
 Opposed against the pleasures Nature loves!

While self-betrayed, and wilfully undone,
 She longs to yield, no sooner wooed than won.
 Try now the merits of this blest exchange
 Of modest truth for wit's eccentric range.

Time was, he closed as he began the day,
 With decent duty, not ashamed to pray ;
 The practice was a bond upon his heart,
 A pledge he gave for a consistent part ;
 Nor could he dare presumptuously displease
 A power, confessed so lately on his knees.

But now, farewell all legendary tales,
 The shadows fly, philosophy prevails,
 Prayer to the winds, and caution to the waves,
 Religion makes the free by nature slaves,
 Priests have invented, and the world admired,
 What knavish priests promulgate as inspired,
 Till Reason, now no longer overawed,
 Resumes her powers, and spurns the clumsy fraud ;
 And common sense diffusing real day,
 The meteor of the Gospel dies away.

Such rhapsodies our shrewd discerning youth
 Learn from expert inquirers after truth ;
 Whose only care, might truth presume to speak,
 Is not to find what they profess to seek.
 And thus, well tutored only while we share

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195

A mother's lecture and a nurse's care,
 And taught at schools much mythologic stuff,
 But sound religion sparingly enough,
 Our early notices of truth, disgraced,
 Soon lose their credit, and are all effaced.

200

Would you your son should be a sot or dunce,
 Lascivious, headstrong, or all these at once ;
 That in good time, the stripling's finished taste
 For loose expense and fashionable waste,
 Should prove your ruin, and his own at last,
 Train him in public with a mob of boys,
 Childish in mischief only and in noise,
 Else of a manly growth, and five in ten
 In infidelity and lewdness, men.

205

There shall he learn, ere sixteen winters old,
 That authors are most useful, pawned or sold ;
 That pedantry is all that schools impart,
 But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart ;
 There waiter Dick, with Bacchanalian lays,
 Shall win his heart, and have his drunken praise,
 His counsellor and bosom-friend shall prove,
 And some street-pacing harlot his first love.
 Schools, unless discipline were doubly strong,
 Detain their adolescent charge too long ;
 The management of tyros of eighteen
 Is difficult, their punishment obscene.

210

The stout tall captain, whose superior size
 The minor heroes view with envious eyes,
 Becomes their pattern, upon whom they fix
 Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks.
 His pride, that scorns to obey or to submit,
 With them is courage ; his effrontery wit ;
 His wild excursions, window-breaking feats,
 Robbery of gardens, quarrels in the streets,
 His hairbreadth 'scapes, and all his daring schemes
 Transport them, and are made their favourite themes ;
 In little bosoms such achievements strike
 A kindred spark, they burn to do the like.

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Thus, half accomplished ere he yet begin
 To show the peeping down upon his chin, 235
 And as maturity of years comes on,
 Made just the adept that you designed your son,
 To ensure the perseverance of his course,
 And give your monstrous project all its force,
 Send him to college. If he there be tamed, 240
 Or in one article of vice reclaimed,
 Where no regard of ord'nances is shown,
 Or looked for now, the fault must be his own.
 Some sneaking virtue lurks in him, no doubt,
 Where neither strumpets' charms, nor drinking bout, 245
 Nor gambling practices, can find it out.
 Such youths of spirit, and that spirit too,
Ye nurseries of our boys, we owe to you:
 Though from ourselves the mischief more proceeds,
 For public schools 'tis public folly feeds. 250
 The slaves of custom and established mode,
 With packhorse constancy we keep the road,
 Crooked or straight, through quags or thorny dells,
 True to the jingling of our leader's bells.
 To follow foolish precedents, and wink 255
 With both our eyes, is easier than to think,
 And such an age as ours balks no expense,
 Except of caution and of common sense;
 Else, sure, notorious fact and proof so plain
 Would turn our steps into a wiser train. 260
 I blame not those who, with what care they can,
 O'erwatch the numerous and unruly clan,
 Or if I blame, 'tis only that they dare
 Promise a work of which they must despair.
 Have ye, ye sage intendants of the whole, 265
 An ubiquarian presence and control,
 Elisha's eye, that when Gehazi strayed,
 Went with him, and saw all the game he played?
 Yes—ye are conscious; and on all the shelves
 Your pupils strike upon, have struck yourselves. 270
 Or if by nature sober, ye had then,

Boys as ye were, the gravity of men,
 Ye knew at least, by constant proofs addressed
 To ears and eyes, the vices of the rest.
 But ye connive at what ye cannot cure,
 And evils not to be endured, endure,
 Lest power exerted, but without success,
 Should make the little ye retain still less. 275

Ye once were justly famed for bringing forth
 Undoubted scholarship and genuine worth,
 And in the firmament of fame still shines
 A glory bright as that of all the signs,
 Of poets raised by you, and statesmen, and divines.
 Peace to them all! those brilliant times are fled,
 And no such lights are kindling in their stead. 285

Our striplings shine indeed, but with such rays
 As set the midnight riot in a blaze,
 And seem, if judged by their expressive looks,
 Deeper in none than in their surgeons' books.

Say, Muse, (for education made the song,
 No Muse can hesitate or linger long)
 What causes move us, knowing, as we must,
 That these menageries all fail their trust,
 To send our sons to scout and scamper there,
 While colts and puppies cost us so much care? 295

Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,
 We love the play-place of our early days.
 The scene is touching, and the heart is stone
 That feels not at that sight, and feels at none.
 The wall on which we tried our graving skill,
 The very name we carved subsisting still, 300

The bench on which we sat while deep employed,
 Though mangled, hacked, and hewed, not yet destroyed;
 The little ones, unbuttoned, glowing hot,
 Playing our games, and on the very spot,
 As happy as we once, to kneel and draw
 The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw; 305

To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,
 Or drive it devious with a dexterous pat;

The pleasing spectacle at once excites
Such recollection of our own delights,
That viewing it, we seem almost to obtain
Our innocent sweet simple years again.

310

This fond attachment to the well-known place,
Whence first we started into life's long race,
Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,
We feel it even in age, and at our latest day.
Hark! how the sire of chits, whose future share
Of classic food begins to be his care,

315

With his own likeness placed on either knee,

320

Indulges all a father's heart-felt glee,

And tells them, as he strokes their silver locks,

That they must soon learn Latin, and to box;

Then turning, he regales his listening wife

325

With all the adventures of his early life,

His skill in coachmanship, or driving chaise,

In bilking tavern bills, and spouting plays;

What shifts he used, detected in a scrape,

How he was flogged, or had the luck to escape,

What sums he lost at play, and how he sold

Watch, seals, and all—till all his pranks are told.

Retracing thus his *frolics* ('tis a name

330

That palliates deeds of folly and of shame)

He gives the local bias all its sway,

Resolves that where he played his sons shall play,

335

And destines their bright genius to be shown

Just in the scene where he displayed his own.

The meek and bashful boy will soon be taught

To be as bold and forward as he ought,

The rude will scuffle through with ease enough,

340

Great schools suit best the sturdy and the rough.

Ah happy designation, prudent choice,

The event is sure, expect it, and rejoice!

Soon see your wish fulfilled in either child,

The pert made perter, and the tame made wild.

345

The great, indeed, by titles, riches, birth,

Excused the incumbrance of more solid worth,

Are best disposed of where with most success
 They may acquire that confident address,
 Those habits of profuse and lewd expense,
 That scorn of all delights but those of sense,
 Which though in plain plebeians we condemn,
 With so much reason all expect from them.
 But families of less illustrious fame,
 Whose chief distinction is their spotless name,
 Whose heirs, their honours none, their income small,
 Must shine by true desert, or not at all,
 What dream they of, that, with so little care
 They risk their hopes, their dearest treasure, there?
 They dream of little Charles or William graced
 With wig prolix, down-flowing to his waist,
 They see the attentive crowds his talents draw,
 They hear him speak—the oracle of law.
 The father who designs his babe a priest,
 Dreams him episcopally such at least,
 And while the playful jockey scours the room
 Briskly, astride upon the parlour broom,
 In fancy sees him more superbly ride
 In coach with purple lined and mitres on its side.
 Events improbable and strange as these,
 Which only a parental eye foresees,
 A public school shall bring to pass with ease.
 But how? resides such virtue in that air,
 As must create an appetite for prayer?
 And will it breathe into him all the zeal
 That candidates for such a prize should feel,
 To take the lead and be the foremost still
 In all true worth and literary skill?
 'Ah blind to bright futurity, untaught
 'The knowledge of the world, and dull of thought!
 'Church-ladders are not always mounted best
 'By learned clerks, and Latinists professed.
 'The exalted prize demands an upward look,
 'Not to be found by poring on a book.
 'Small skill in Latin, and still less in Greek,

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‘Is more than adequate to all I seek.
 ‘Let erudition grace him or not grace,
 ‘I give the bauble but the second place,
 ‘His wealth, fame, honours, all that I intend,
 ‘Subsist and centre in one point—a friend. 390
 ‘A friend, whate'er he studies or neglects,
 ‘Shall give him consequence, heal all defects.
 ‘His intercourse with peers, and sons of peers—
 ‘There dawns the splendour of his future years,
 ‘In that bright quarter his propitious skies 395
 ‘Shall blush betimes, and there his glory rise.
 “Your Lordship!” and “Your Grace!” what school can teach
 ‘A rhetoric equal to those parts of speech?
 ‘What need of Homer’s verse, or Tully’s prose,
 ‘Sweet interjections! if he learn but those? 400
 ‘Let reverend churls his ignorance rebuke,
 ‘Who starve upon a dog’s-ear’d Pentateuch,
 ‘The parson knows enough who knows a Duke.’ \
 Egregious purpose! worthily begun
 In barbarous prostitution of your son; 405
 Pressed on his part by means that would disgrace
 A scrivener’s clerk, or footman out of place,
 And ending, if at last its end be gained,
 In sacrilege, in God’s own house profaned.
 It may succeed; and if his sins should call 410
 For more than common punishment, it shall.
 The wretch shall rise, and be the thing on earth
 Least qualified in honour, learning, worth,
 To occupy a sacred, awful post,
 In which the best and worthiest tremble most. 415
 The royal letters are a thing of course,
 A king, that would, might recommend his horse,
 And Deans, no doubt, and Chapters, with one voice,
 As bound in duty, would confirm the choice.
 Behold your Bishop! well he plays his part, 420
 Christian in name, and infidel in heart,
 Ghostly in office, earthly in his plan,
 A slave at court, elsewhere a lady’s man,

Dumb as a senator, and as a priest
 A piece of mere church-furniture at best; 425
 To live estranged from God his total scope,
 And his end sure, without one glimpse of hope.
 But fair although and feasible it seem,
 Depend not much upon your golden dream;
 For Providence, that seems concerned to exempt 430
 The hallowed bench from absolute contempt,
 In spite of all the wrigglers into place,
 Still keeps a seat or two for worth and grace;
 And therefore 'tis, that, though the sight be rare,
 We sometimes see a Lowth or Bagot there. 435
 Besides, school-friendships are not always found,
 Though fair in promise, permanent and sound;
 The most disinterested and virtuous minds,
 In early years connected, time unbinds;
 New situations give a different cast 440
 Of habit, inclination, temper, taste;
 And he that seemed our counterpart at first,
 Soon shows the strong similitude reversed.
 Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,
 And make mistakes for manhood to reform. 445
 Boys are, at best, but pretty buds unblown,
 Whose scent and hues are rather guessed than known;
 Each dreams that each is just what he appears,
 But learns his error in maturer years,
 When disposition, like a sail unfurled, 450
 Shows all its rents and patches to the world.
 If therefore, even when honest in design,
 A boyish friendship may so soon decline,
 'Twere wiser sure to inspire a little heart
 With just abhorrence of so mean a part, 455
 Than set your son to work at a vile trade
 For wages so unlikely to be paid.
 Our public hives of puerile resort,
 That are of chief and most approved report,
 To such base hopes, in many a sordid soul, 460
 Owe their repute in part, but not the whole.

A principle, whose proud pretensions pass
 Unquestioned, though the jewel be but glass,
 That with a world, not often over-nice,
 Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice,
 Or rather a gross compound, justly tried,
 Of envy, hatred, jealousy and pride,
 Contributes most perhaps to enhance their fame,
 And Emulation is its specious name.

Boys, once on fire with that contentious zeal,
 Feel all the rage that female rivals feel,
 The prize of beauty in a woman's eyes
 Not brighter than in theirs the scholar's prize.

The spirit of that competition burns
 With all varieties of ill by turns,
 Each vainly magnifies his own success,
 Resents his fellow's, wishes it were less,
 Exults in his miscarriage if he fail,
 Deems his reward too great if he prevail,
 And labours to surpass him day and night,
 Less for improvement than to tickle spite.
 The spur is powerful, and I grant its force,
 It pricks the genius forward in its course,
 Allows short time for play, and none for sloth,
 And felt alike by each, advances both,
 But judge, where so much evil intervenes,
 The end, though plausible, not worth the means.

Weigh, for a moment, classical desert
 Against a heart depraved and temper hurt,
 Hurt too perhaps for life, for early wrong
 Done to the nobler part affects it long;
 And you are staunch indeed in learning's cause
 If you can crown a discipline that draws
 Such mischiefs after it, with much applause.

Connexion formed for interest, and endeared
 By selfish views, thus censured and cashiered;
 And Emulation, as engendering hate,
 Doomed to a no less ignominious fate:
 The props of such proud seminaries fall,

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The Jachin and the Boaz of them all. 500

Great schools rejected then, as those that swell
Beyond a size that can be managed well,
Shall royal institutions miss the bays,
And small academies win all the praise?

Force not my drift beyond its just intent, 505
I praise a school as Pope a government;
So take my judgment in his language dressed,
'Whate'er is best administered, is best.'

Few boys are born with talents that excel,
But all are capable of living well; 510
Then ask not, whether limited or large?
But, watch they strictly, or neglect their charge?

If anxious only that their boys may learn,
While morals languish, a despised concern,
The great and small deserve one common blame, 515
Different in size, but in effect the same.

Much zeal in virtue's cause all teachers boast,
Though motives of mere lucre sway the most;
Therefore in towns and cities they abound,
For there the game they seek is easiest found, 520
Though there, in spite of all that care can do,
Traps to catch youth are most abundant too.

If shrewd, and of a well-constructed brain,
Keen in pursuit, and vigorous to retain,
Your son come forth a prodigy of skill; 525
As wheresoever taught, so formed, he will,
The pedagogue, with self-complacent air,
Claims more than half the praise as his due share;

But if, with all his genius, he betray,
Not more intelligent than loose and gay, 530
Such vicious habits as disgrace his name,
Threaten his health, his fortune, and his fame,
Though want of due restraint alone have bred
The symptoms that you see with so much dread,

Unenvied there, he may sustain alone 535
The whole reproach, the fault was all his own.
Oh! 'tis a sight to be with joy perused,

By all whom sentiment has not abused,
 New-fangled sentiment, the boasted grace
 Of those who never feel in the right place,
 A sight surpassed by none that we can show,
 Though Vestris on one leg still shine below,
 A father blest with an ingenuous son,
 Father, and friend, and tutor, all in one.

540

How!—turn again to tales long since forgot,
 Æsop, and Phædrus, and the rest?—Why not?

545

He will not blush, that has a father's heart,
 To take in childish plays a childish part,
 But bends his sturdy back to any toy

That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy;

550

Then why resign into a stranger's hand

A task as much within your own command,

That God and Nature, and your interest too,

Seem with one voice to delegate to you?

Why hire a lodging in a house unknown

555

For one whose tenderest thoughts all hover round your own?

This second weaning, needless as it is,

How does it lacerate both your heart and his!

The indented stick, that loses day by day

560

Notch after notch till all are smoothed away,

Bears witness, long ere his dismission come,

With what intense desire he wants his home.

But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof

Bid fair enough to answer in the proof,

Harmless, and safe, and natural, as they are,

565

A disappointment waits him even there:

Arrived, he feels an unexpected change,

He blushes, hangs his head, is shy, and strange,

No longer takes, as once, with fearless ease,

His favourite stand between his father's knees,

570

But seeks the corner of some distant seat,

And eyes the door, and watches a retreat,

And least familiar where he should be most,

Feels all his happiest privileges lost.

Alas, poor boy!—the natural effect

575

Of love by absence chilled into respect.	
Say, what accomplishments, at school acquired,	
Brings he to sweeten fruits so undesired ?	
Thou well deservest an alienated son,	
Unless thy conscious heart acknowledge—none ;	580
None that, in thy domestic snug recess,	
He had not made his own with more address,	
Though some, perhaps, that shock thy feeling mind,	
And better never learned, or left behind.	
Add too, that thus estranged, thou canst obtain	585
By no kind arts his confidence again ;	
That here begins with most that long complaint	
Of filial frankness lost, and love grown faint,	
Which, oft neglected, in life's waning years	
A parent pours into regardless ears.	590
Like caterpillars dangling under trees	
By slender threads, and swinging in the breeze,	
Which filthily bewray and sore disgrace	
The boughs in which are bred the unseemly race,	
While every worm industriously weaves	595
And winds his web about the rivelled leaves ;	
So numerous are the follies that annoy	
The mind and heart of every sprightly boy ;	
Imaginations noxious and perverse,	
Which admonition can alone disperse.	600
The encroaching nuisance asks a faithful hand,	
Patient, affectionate, of high command,	
To check the procreation of a breed	
Sure to exhaust the plant on which they feed.	
'Tis not enough that Greek or Roman page,	605
At stated hours, his freakish thoughts engage ;	
Even in his pastimes he requires a friend	
To warn, and teach him safely to unbend,	
O'er all his pleasures gently to preside,	
Watch his emotions and control their tide,	
And levying thus, and with an easy sway,	
A tax of profit from his very play,	
To impress a value, not to be erased,	610

On moments squandered else, and running all to waste.
 And seems it nothing in a father's eye 615
 That unimproved those many moments fly?
 And is he well content his son should find
 No nourishment to feed his growing mind,
 But conjugated verbs, and nouns declined?
 For such is all the mental food purveyed 620
 By public hackneys in the schooling trade;
 Who feed a pupil's intellect with store
 Of syntax, truly, but with little more,
 Dismiss their cares when they dismiss their flock,
 Machines themselves, and governed by a clock. 625
 Perhaps a father, blessed with any brains,
 Would deem it no abuse, or waste of pains,
 To improve this diet, at no great expense,
 With savoury truth and wholesome common sense;
 To lead his son, for prospects of delight, 630
 To some not steep, though philosophic, height,
 Thence to exhibit to his wondering eyes
 Yon circling worlds, their distance, and their size,
 The moon of Jove, and Saturn's belted ball,
 And the harmonious order of them all; 635
 To show him in an insect, or a flower,
 Such microscopic proof of skill and power,
 As, hid from ages past, God now displays
 To combat atheists with in modern days;
 To spread the earth before him and commend, 640
 With designation of the finger's end,
 Its various parts to his attentive note,
 Thus bringing home to him the most remote;
 To teach his heart to glow with generous flame,
 Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame; 645
 And, more than all, with commendation due,
 To set some living worthy in his view,
 Whose fair example may at once inspire
 A wish to copy what he must admire.
 Such knowledge, gained betimes, and which appears, 650
 Though solid, not too weighty for his years,

Sweet in itself, and not forbidding sport,
 When health demands it, of athletic sort,
 Would make him what some lovely boys have been,
 And more than one perhaps that I have seen,
 An evidence and reprehension both
 Of the mere schoolboy's lean and tardy growth.

655

Art thou a man professionally tied,
 With all thy faculties elsewhere applied,
 Too busy to intend a meaner care
 Than how to enrich thyself, and next, thine heir; 660
 Or art thou (as, though rich, perhaps thou art)
 But poor in knowledge, having none to impart:
 Behold that figure, neat, though plainly clad,
 His sprightly mingled with a shade of sad; 665
 Not of a nimble tongue, though now and then
 Heard to articulate like other men,
 No jester, and yet lively in discourse,
 His phrase well-chosen, clear, and full of force,
 And his address, if not quite French in ease, 670
 Not English stiff, but frank, and formed to please,
 Low in the world, because he scorns its arts,
 A man of letters, manners, morals, parts,
 Unpatronised, and therefore little known,
 Wise for himself and his few friends alone— 675
 In him thy well-appointed proxy see,
 Armed for a work too difficult for thee;
 Prepared by taste, by learning, and true worth,
 To form thy son, to strike his genius forth,
 Beneath thy roof, beneath thine eye, to prove
 The force of discipline when backed by love, 680
 To double all thy pleasure in thy child,
 His mind informed, his morals undefiled.
 Safe under such a wing, the boy shall show
 No spots contracted among grooms below,
 Nor taint his speech with meannesses, designed
 By footman Tom for witty and refined.
 There, in his commerce with the liveried herd,
 Lurks the contagion chiefly to be feared;

685

For since (so fashion dictates) all, who claim
A higher than a mere plebeian fame,
Find it expedient, come what mischief may,
To entertain a thief or two in pay,
And they that can afford the expense of more,
Some half a dozen, and some half a score, 690
Great cause occurs to save him from a band
So sure to spoil him, and so near at hand,
A point secured, if once he be supplied
With some such Mentor always at his side.
Are such men rare? perhaps they would abound
Were occupation easier to be found, 700
Were education, else so sure to fail,
Conducted on a manageable scale,
And schools, that have outlived all just esteem,
Exchanged for the secure domestic scheme.—
But having found him, be thou Duke or Earl, 705
Show thou hast sense enough to prize the pearl,
And as thou wouldest the advancement of thine heir
In all good faculties beneath his care,
Respect, as is but rational and just,
A man deemed worthy of so dear a trust. 710
Despised by thee, what more can he expect
From youthful folly, than the same neglect?
A flat and fatal negative obtains
That instant, upon all his future pains; 715
His lessons tire, his mild rebukes offend,
And all the instructions of thy son's best friend
Are a stream choked, or trickling to no end.
Doom him not then to solitary meals,
But recollect that he has sense, and feels, 720
And that, possessor of a soul refined,
An upright heart, and cultivated mind,
His post not mean, his talents not unknown,
He deems it hard to vegetate alone.
And if admitted at thy board he sit,
Account him no just mark for idle wit, 725
Offend him not, whom modesty restrains

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From repartee, with jokes that he disdains,
 Much less transfix his feelings with an oath,
 Nor frown, unless he vanish with the cloth.—

730

And trust me, his utility may reach
 To more than he is hired or bound to teach,
 Much trash unuttered, and some ills undone,
 Through reverence of the censor of thy son.

But, if thy table be indeed unclean,
 Foul with excess, and with discourse obscene,
 And thou a wretch, whom, following her old plan,
 The world accounts an honourable man,

735

Because forsooth thy courage has been tried
 And stood the test, perhaps on the wrong side;
 Though thou hadst never grace enough to prove
 That anything but vice could win thy love;—

740

Or hast thou a polite, card-playing wife,
 Chained to the routs that she frequents for life;
 Who, just when industry begins to snore,

745

Flies, winged with joy, to some coach-crowded door;
 And thrice in every winter throngs thine own
 With half the chariots and sedans in town;

Thyself meanwhile e'en shifting as thou mayst,
 Not very sober though, nor very chaste;—

750

Or is thine house, though less superb thy rank,
 If not a scene of pleasure, a mere blank,
 And thou at best, and in thy soberest mood,

A trifler vain, and empty of all good?

Though mercy for thyself thou canst have none,

755

Hear Nature plead, show mercy to thy son;
 Saved from his home, where every day brings forth
 Some mischief fatal to his future worth,

Find him a better in a distant spot,

Within some pious pastor's humble cot,

760

Where vile example (yours I chiefly mean,

The most seducing, and the oftenest seen)

May never more be stamped upon his breast,

Not yet perhaps incurably impressed.

Where early rest makes early rising sure,

765

Disease or comes not, or finds easy cure,
 Prevented much by diet neat and plain ;
 Or if it enter, soon starved out again :
 Where all the attention of his faithful host,
 Discreetly limited to two at most,
 May raise such fruits as shall reward his care,
 And not at last evaporate in air :

770

Where, stillness aiding study, and his mind
 Serene, and to his duties much inclined,
 Not occupied in day-dreams, as at home,
 Of pleasures past, or follies yet to come,
 His virtuous toil may terminate at last
 In settled habit and decided taste.—

775

But whom do I advise ? the fashion-led,
 The incorrigibly wrong, the deaf, the dead !

780

Whom care and cool deliberation suit
 Not better much than spectacles a brute :
 Who if their sons some slight tuition share,

Deem it of no great moment whose, or where ;
 Too proud to adopt the thoughts of one unknown,
 And much too gay to have any of their own.

785

But courage, man ! methought the Muse replied,
 Mankind are various, and the world is wide :

The ostrich, silliest of the feathered kind,
 And formed of God without a parent's mind,
 Commits her eggs, incautious, to the dust,
 Forgetful that the foot may crush the trust ;
 And while on public nurseries they rely,
 Not knowing, and too oft not caring, why,
 Irrational in what they thus prefer,

790

No few, that would seem wise, resemble her.
 But all are not alike. Thy warning voice

May here and there prevent erroneous choice ;
 And some perhaps, who, busy as they are,

Yet make their progeny their dearest care

795

(Whose hearts will ache, once told what ills may reach
 Their offspring, left upon so wild a beach),
 Will need no stress of argument to enforce

800

The expedience of a less adventurous course :
The rest will slight thy counsel, or condemn ;
But *they* have human feelings—turn to *them*. 805

To you, then, tenants of life's middle state,
Securely placed between the small and great,
Whose character, yet undebauched, retains
Two thirds of all the virtue that remains, 810
Who wise yourselves, desire your sons should learn
Your wisdom and your ways—to you I turn.
Look round you on a world perversely blind ;
See what contempt is fallen on humankind ;
See wealth abused, and dignities misplaced, 815
Great titles, offices, and trusts disgraced,
Long lines of ancestry, renowned of old,
Their noble qualities all quenched and cold ;
See Bedlam's closeted and handcuffed charge
Surpassed in frenzy by the mad at large ; 820
See great commanders making war a trade,
Great lawyers, lawyers without study made :
Churchmen, in whose esteem their best employ
Is odious, and their wages all their joy,
Who far enough from furnishing their shelves 825
With Gospel lore, turn infidels themselves ;
See womanhood despised, and manhood shamed
With infamy too nauseous to be named,
Fops at all corners, ladylike in mien,
Civetted fellows, smelt ere they are seen, 830
Else coarse and rude in manners, and their tongue
On fire with curses, and with nonsense hung,
Now flushed with drunkenness, now with whoredom pale,
Their breath a sample of last night's regale ;
See volunteers in all the vilest arts, 835
Men well endowed, of honourable parts,
Designed by Nature wise, but self-made fools ;
All these, and more like these, were bred at schools.
And if it chance, as sometimes chance it will,
That though school-bred the boy be virtuous still, 840
Such rare exceptions, shining in the dark,

Prove, rather than impeach, the just remark,
As here and there a twinkling star desried
Serves but to show how black is all beside.
Now look on him, whose very voice in tone
Just echoes thine, whose features are thine own,
And stroke his polished cheek of purest red,
And lay thine hand upon his flaxen' head,
And say,—‘My boy, the unwelcome hour is come,
‘When thou, transplanted from thy genial home, 845
‘Must find a colder soil and bleaker air,
‘And trust for safety to a stranger’s care.
‘What character, what turn, thou wilt assume
‘From constant converse with I know not whom;
‘Who there will court thy friendship, with what views, 855
‘And, artless as thou art, whom thou wilt choose;
‘Though much depends on what thy choice shall be
‘Is all chance-medley, and unknown to me.’—
Canst thou, the tear just trembling on thy lids,
And while the dreadful risk foreseen forbids; 860
Free, too, and under no constraining force,
Unless the sway of custom warp thy course;
Lay such a stake upon the losing side,
Merely to gratify so blind a guide?
Thou canst not! Nature, pulling at thine heart, 865
Condemns the unfatherly, the imprudent part.
Thou wouldest not, deaf to Nature’s tenderest plea,
Turn him adrift upon a rolling sea,
Nor say,—‘Go thither;—conscious that there lay
A brood of asps, or quicksands, in his way; 870
Then, only governed by the self-same rule.
Of natural pity, send him not to school.
No!—guard him better. Is he not thine own,
Thyself in miniature, thy flesh, thy bone?
And hopest thou not (‘tis every father’s hope) 875
That since thy strength must with thy years elope,
And thou wilt need some comfort to assuage
Health’s last farewell, a staff of thine old age,
That then, in recompence of all thy cares,

Thy child shall show respect to thy gray hairs, 880
 Befriend thee, of all other friends bereft,
 And give thy life its only cordial left ?
 Aware then how much danger intervenes,
 To compass that good end, forecast the means.
 His heart, now passive, yields to thy command ; 885
 Secure it thine, its key is in thine hand.
 If thou desert thy charge, and throw it wide,
 Nor heed what guests there enter and abide,
 Complain not if attachments lewd and base
 Supplant thee in it, and usurp thy place. 890
 But if thou guard its sacred chambers sure
 From vicious inmates and delights impure,
 Either his gratitude shall hold him fast,
 And keep him warm and filial to the last ;
 Or if he prove unkind (as who can say, 895
 But being man, and therefore frail, he may)
 One comfort yet shall cheer thine aged heart ;—
 Howe'er he slight thee, thou hast done thy part.
 'Oh, barbarous ! wouldst thou with a Gothic hand
 Pull down the schools—what !—all the schools i' th' land ; 900
 Or throw them up to livery-nags and grooms,
 Or turn them into shops and auction rooms ?'
 A captious question, sir, and yours is one,
 Deserves an answer similar, or none.
 Wouldst thou, possessor of a flock, employ 905
 (Apprised that he is such) a careless boy,
 And feed him well, and give him handsome pay,
 Merely to sleep, and let them run astray ?
 Survey our schools and colleges, and see
 A sight not much unlike my simile. 910
 From education, as the leading cause,
 The public character its colour draws ;
 Thence the prevailing manners take their cast,
 Extravagant or sober, loose or chaste.
 And, though I would not advertise them yet, 915
 Nor write on each—'This building to be let,'
 Unless the world were all prepared to embrace

A plan well worthy to supply their place;
Yet, backward as they are, and long have been,
To cultivate and keep the MORALS clean
(Forgive the crime), I wish them, I confess,
Or better managed, or encouraged less.

920

MINOR POEMS.

AN EPISTLE TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR Joseph—five and twenty years ago—

Alas, how time escapes!—'tis even so

With frequent intercourse, and always sweet,

And always friendly, we were wont to cheat

A tedious hour—and now we never meet!

5

As some grave gentleman in Terence says,

('Twas therefore much the same in ancient days)

Good luck, we know not what to-morrow brings—

Strange fluctuation of all human things!

True. Changes will befall, and friends may part,

10

But distance only cannot change the heart:

And were I called to prove the assertion true,

One proof should serve—a reference to you.

Whence comes it then, that in the wane of life,

Though nothing have occurred to kindle strife,

15

We find the friends we fancied we had won,

Though numerous once, reduced to few or none?

Can gold grow worthless that has stood the touch?

No; gold they seemed, but they were never such.

Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe,

20

Swinging the parlour door upon its hinge,

Dreading a negative, and overawed

Lest he should trespass, begged to go abroad.

'Go, fellow!—whither?'—turning short about—

'Nay—stay at home—you're always going out.'

25

'Tis but a step, sir, just at the street's end.'

'For what?'—'An please you, sir, to see a friend.'—

'A friend!' Horatio cried, and seemed to start—
 'Yea, marry shalt thou, and with all my heart.
 'And fetch my cloak; for, though the night be raw,
 'I'll see him too—the first I ever saw.'

I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,
 And was his plaything often when a child;
 But somewhat at that moment pinched him close,
 Else he was seldom bitter or morose. 30
 Perhaps his confidence just then betrayed,
 His grief might prompt him with the speech he made;
 Perhaps 'twas mere good humour gave it birth,
 The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth.
 Howe'er it was, his language, in my mind,
 Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind. 40

But not to moralize too much, and strain
 To prove an evil of which all complain,
 (I hate long arguments verbosely spun);
 One story more, dear Hill, and I have done. 45
 Once on a time an Emperor, a wise man,
 No matter where, in China or Japan,
 Decreed that whosoever should offend
 Against the well-known duties of a friend,
 Convicted once, should ever after wear 50
 But half a coat, and show his bosom bare.
 The punishment importing this, no doubt,
 That all was naught within, and all found out.

Oh, happy Britain! we have not to fear
 Such hard and arbitrary measure here;
 Else, could a law like that which I relate,
 Once have the sanction of our triple state,
 Some few that I have known in days of old,
 Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold;
 While you, my friend, whatever wind should blow, 60
 Might traverse England safely to and fro,
 An honest man, close-buttoned to the chin,
 Broad-cloth without, and a warm heart within.

ODE TO APOLLO.

ON AN INKGGLASS ALMOST DRIED IN THE SUN.

PATRON of all those luckless brains,
 That to the wrong side leaning,
 Indite much metre with much pains,
 And little or no meaning.

Ah! why, since oceans, rivers, streams, 5
 That water all the nations,
 Pay tribute to thy glorious beams,
 In constant exhalations ;

Why, stooping from the noon of day
 Too covetous of drink, 10
 Apollo, hast thou stolen away
 A poet's drop of ink ?

Upborne into the viewless air,
 It floats a vapour now,
 Impelled through regions dense and rare 15
 By all the winds that blow.

Ordained perhaps, ere summer flies,
 Combined with millions more,
 To form an Iris in the skies,
 Though black and foul before. 20

Illustrious drop ! and happy then,
 Beyond the happiest lot
 Of all that ever passed my pen,
 So soon to be forgot.

Phœbus, if such be thy design, 25
 To place it in thy bow,
 Give wit, that what is left may shine
 With equal grace below.

THE FAITHFUL BIRD.

THE greenhouse is my summer seat;
 My shrubs displaced from that retreat
 Enjoyed the open air;
 Two goldfinches, whose sprightly song
 Had been their mutual solace long,
 Lived happy prisoners there.

5

They sang, as blithe as finches sing
 That flutter loose on golden wing,
 And frolic where they list;
 Strangers to liberty, 'tis true,
 But that delight they never knew,
 And therefore never missed.

10

But Nature works in every breast,
 With force not easily suppressed;
 And Dick felt some desires,
 That, after many an effort vain,
 Instructed him at length to gain
 A pass between his wires.

15

The open windows seemed to invite
 The freeman to a farewell flight;
 But Tom was still confined;
 And Dick, although his way was clear,
 Was much too generous and sincere
 To leave his friend behind.

20

So settling on his cage, by play,
 And chirp, and kiss, he seemed to say
 You must not live alone—
 Nor would he quit that chosen stand
 Till I, with slow and cautious hand,
 Returned him to his own.

25

30

O ye, who never taste the joys
 Of Friendship, satisfied with noise,

Fandango, ball, and rout!
 Blush when I tell you how a bird
 A prison with a friend preferred
 To Liberty without. 35

PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED.

A FABLE.

I SHALL not ask Jean Jacques Rousseau
 If birds confabulate or no;
 'Tis clear that they were always able
 To hold discourse, at least in fable;
 And e'en the child who knows no better,
 Than to interpret by the letter 5
 A story of a cock and bull,
 Must have a most uncommon skull.

It chanced then on a winter's day,
 But warm, and bright, and calm as May,
 The birds, conceiving a design
 To forestall sweet St. Valentine,
 In many an orchard, copse, and grove,
 Assembled on affairs of love,
 And with much twitter, and much chatter,
 Began to agitate the matter. 15
 At length a Bullfinch, who could boast
 More years and wisdom than the most,
 Entreated, opening wide his beak,
 A moment's liberty to speak; 20
 And, silence publicly enjoined,
 Delivered briefly thus his mind:

' My friends ! be cautious how ye treat
 The subject upon which we meet;
 I fear we shall have winter yet.'

A Finch whose tongue knew no control,
 With golden wing and satin poll,
 A last year's bird, who ne'er had tried
 What marriage means, thus pert replied: 25

‘Methinks the gentleman,’ quoth she,
 ‘Opposite in the apple-tree,
 By his good will would keep us single,
 Till yonder heaven and earth shall mingle,
 Or (which is likelier to befall)
 Till death exterminate us all.
 I marry without more ado;
 My dear Dick Redcap, what say you?’

Dick heard, and tweedling, ogling, bridling,
 Turning short round, strutting, and sideling,
 Attested, glad, his approbation
 Of an immediate conjugation.
 Their sentiments so well expressed
 Influenced mightily the rest,
 All paired, and each pair built a nest.

But though the birds were thus in haste,
 The leaves came on not quite so fast,
 And Destiny, that sometimes bears
 An aspect stern on man’s affairs,
 Not altogether smiled on theirs.

The wind, of late breathed gently forth,
 Now shifted east, and east by north;
 Bare trees and shrubs but ill, you know,
 Could shelter them from rain or snow,
 Stepping into their nests, they paddled,
 Themselves were chilled, their eggs were addled: 55
 Soon every father-bird and mother
 Grew quarrelsome, and pecked each other,
 Parted without the least regret,
 Except that they had ever met,
 And learned in future to be wiser,
 Than to neglect a good adviser. 60

MORAL.

Misses! the tale that I relate
 This lesson seems to carry—
 Choose not alone a proper mate,
 But proper time to marry.

30

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THE NEEDLESS ALARM.

A TALE.

THERE is a field, through which I often pass,
 Thick overspread with moss and silky grass,
 Adjoining close to Kilwick's echoing wood,
 Where oft the bitch-fox hides her hapless brood,
 Reserved to solace many a neighbouring squire,
 That he may follow them through brake and brier,
 Contusion hazarding of neck or spine,
 Which rural gentlemen call sport divine,
 A narrow brook, by rushy banks concealed,
 Runs in a bottom, and divides the field ;
 Oaks intersperse it, that had once a head,
 But now wear crests of oven-wood instead ;
 And where the land slopes to its watery bourn
 Wide yawns a gulf beside a ragged thorn ;
 Bricks line the sides, but shivered long ago,
 And horrid brambles intertwine below ;
 A hollow scooped, I judge, in ancient time,
 For baking earth, or burning rock to lime.

Not yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,
 With which the fieldfare, wintry guest, is fed ;
 Nor Autumn yet had brushed from every spray,
 With her chill hand, the mellow leaves away ;
 But corn was housed, and beans were in the stack,
 Now therefore issued forth the spotted pack,
 With tails high mounted, ears hung low, and throats
 With a whole gamut filled of heavenly notes,
 For which, alas ! my destiny severe,
 Though ears she gave me two, gave me no ear.

The sun accomplishing his early march,
 His lamp now planted on Heaven's topmost arch,
 When, exercise and air my only aim,
 And heedless whither, to that field I came,
 Ere yet with ruthless joy the happy hound
 Told hill and dale that Reynard's track was found,

5

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Or with the high-raised horn's melodious clang
All Kilwick and all Dinglederry rang.

Sheep grazed the field; some with soft bosom pressed
The herb as soft, while nibbling strayed the rest;
Nor noise was heard but of the hasty brook,
Struggling, detained in many a petty nook. 40
All seemed so peaceful, that from them conveyed,
To me their peace by kind contagion spread.

But when the huntsman, with distended cheek,
'Gan make his instrument of music speak,
And from within the wood that crash was heard, 45
Though not a hound from whom it burst appeared,
The sheep recumbent, and the sheep that grazed,
All huddling into phalanx, stood and gazed,
Admiring, terrified, the novel strain,
Then coursed the field around, and coursed it round again;
But recollecting, with a sudden thought, 51
That flight in circles urged advanced them nought,
They gathered close around the old pit's brink,
And thought again—but knew not what to think.

The man to solitude accustomed long, 55
Perceives in every thing that lives a tongue;
Not animals alone, but shrubs and trees
Have speech for him, and understood with ease;
After long drought, when rains abundant fall,
He hears the herbs and flowers rejoicing all; 60
Knows what the freshness of their hue implies,
How glad they catch the largess of the skies;
But, with precision nicer still, the mind
He scans of every locomotive kind;
Birds of all feather, beasts of every name, 65
That serve mankind, or shun them, wild or tame;
The looks and gestures of their griefs and fears
Have all articulation in his ears;
He spells them true by intuition's light,
And needs no glossary to set him right. 70

This truth premised was needful as a text,
To win due credence to what follows next.

Awhile they mused; surveying every face,
 Thou hadst supposed them of superior race;
 Their periwigs of wool and fears combined,
 Stamped on each countenance such marks of mind, 75
 That sage they seemed, as lawyers o'er a doubt,
 Which, puzzling long, at last they puzzle out;
 Or academic tutors, teaching youths,
 Sure ne'er to want them, mathematic truths; 80
 When thus a mutton statelier than the rest,
 A ram, the ewes and wethers, sad, addressed:

‘Friends! we have lived too long. I never heard
 Sounds such as these, so worthy to be feared.
 Could I believe, that winds for ages pent 85
 In earth’s dark womb have found at last a vent,
 And from their prison-house below arise,
 With all these hideous howlings to the skies,
 I could be much composed, nor should appear,
 For such a cause, to feel the slightest fear. 90
 Yourselves have seen, what time the thunders rolled
 All night, me resting quiet in the fold.
 Or heard we that tremendous bray alone,
 I could expound the melancholy tone;
 Should deem it by our old companion made, 95
 The ass; for he, we know, has lately strayed,
 And being lost, perhaps, and wandering wide,
 Might be supposed to clamour for a guide.
 But ah! those dreadful yells what soul can hear,
 That owns a carcass, and not quake for fear? 100
 Demons produce them doubtless, brazen-clawed,
 And fanged with brass the demons are abroad;
 I hold it therefore wisest and most fit
 That, life to save, we leap into the pit.’

Him answered then his loving mate and true, 105
 But more discreet than he, a Cambrian ewe:
 ‘How! leap into the pit our life to save!
 To save our life leap all into the grave!
 For can we find it less? Contemplate first
 The depth, how awful! falling there, we burst: 110

Or should the brambles, interposed, our fall
 In part abate, that happiness were small;
 For with a race like theirs no chance I see
 Of peace or ease to creatures clad as we.

Meantime, noise kills not. Be it Dapple's bray, 115
 Or be it not, or be it whose it may,
 And rush those other sounds, that seem by tongues
 Of demons uttered, from whatever lungs,
 Sounds are but sounds, and till the cause appear,
 We have at least commodious standing here. 120
 Come fiend, come fury, giant, monster, blast
 From earth or hell, we can but plunge at last.'

While thus she spake, I fainter heard the peals,
 For Reynard, close attended at his heels
 By panting dog, tired man, and spattered horse, 125
 Through mere good fortune, took a different course.
 The flock grew calm again, and I, the road
 Following, that led me to my own abode,
 Much wondered that the silly sheep had found
 Such cause of terror in an empty sound 130
 So sweet to huntsman, gentleman, and hound.

MORAL.

Beware of desperate steps. The darkest day,
 Live till to-morrow, will have passed away.

THE YEARLY DISTRESS; OR, TITHING TIME, AT STOCK, IN ESSEX.

Verses addressed to a Country Clergyman complaining of the disagreeableness of the day annually appointed for receiving the Dues at the Parsonage.

COME, ponder well, for 'tis no jest,
 To laugh it would be wrong,
 The troubles of a worthy priest,
 The burden of my song.

This priest he merry is and blithe
 Three quarters of a year,
 But oh! it cuts him like a scythe,
 When tithing time draws near.

He then is full of fright and fears
 As one at point to die,
 And long before the day appears,
 He heaves up many a sigh.

For then the farmers come jog, jog,
 Along the miry road,
 Each heart as heavy as a log,
 To make their payments good.

In sooth the sorrow of such days
 Is not to be expressed,
 When he that takes, and he that pays,
 Are both alike distressed.

Now, all unwelcome at his gates,
 The clumsy swains alight,
 With rueful faces and bald pates—
 He trembles at the sight.

And well he may, for well he knows
 Each bumpkin of the clan,
 Instead of paying what he owes,
 Will cheat him if he can.

So in they come—each makes his leg,
 And flings his head before,
 And looks as if he came to beg,
 And not to quit a score.

‘And how does miss and madam do,
 The little boy and all?’
 ‘All tight and well. And how do you,
 Good Mr. What-d’ye-call?’

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The dinner comes, and down they sit:
 Were e'er such hungry folk?
 There's little talking, and no wit;
 It is no time to joke.

40

One wipes his nose upon his sleeve,
 One spits upon the floor,
 Yet, not to give offence or grieve,
 Holds up the cloth before.

The punch goes round, and they are dull,
 And lumpish still as ever;
 Like barrels with their bellies full,
 They only weigh the heavier.

45

At length the busy time begins,
 'Come, neighbours, we must wag'—
 The money chinks, down drop their chins,
 Each lugging out his bag.

50

One talks of mildew and of frost,
 And one of storms of hail,
 And one of pigs that he has lost
 By maggots at the tail.

55

Quoth one, 'A rarer man than you
 In pulpit none shall hear:
 But yet, methinks, to tell you true,
 You sell it plaguy dear.'

60

Oh! why are farmers made so coarse,
 Or clergy made so fine?
 A kick that scarce would move a horse,
 May kill a sound divine.

Then let the boobies stay at home;
 'Twould cost him, I dare say,
 Less trouble taking twice the sum
 Without the clowns that pay.

65

GRATITUDE.

ADDRESSED TO LADY HESKETH.

THIS cap, that so stately appears,
 With ribbon-bound tassel on high,
 Which seems by the crest that it rears
 Ambitious of brushing the sky:

This cap to my cousin I owe, 5
 She gave it, and gave me beside,
 Wreathed into an elegant bow,
 The ribbon with which it is tied.

This wheel-footed studying chair,
 Contrived both for toil and repose, 10
 Wide-elbowed, and wadded with hair,
 In which I both scribble and dose,
 Bright-studded to dazzle the eyes,
 And rival in lustre of that
 In which, or astronomy lies, 15
 Fair Cassiopeia sat:

These carpets, so soft to the foot,
 Caledonia's traffic and pride!
 Oh spare them, ye knights of the boot,
 Escaped from a cross country ride! 20
 This table and mirror within,
 Secure from collision and dust,
 At which I oft shave cheek and chin,
 And periwig nicely adjust:

This moveable structure of shelves, 25
 For its beauty admired and its use,
 And charged with octavos and twelves,
 The gayest I had to produce;
 Where, flaming in scarlet and gold,
 My poems enchanted I view, 30
 And hope, in due time, to behold
 My Iliad and Odyssey too:

This china that decks the alcove,
 Which here people call a buffet,
 But what the gods call it above
 Has ne'er been revealed to us yet;
 These curtains, that keep the room warm
 Or cool, as the season demands,
 These stoves that for pattern and form
 Seem the labour of Mulciber's hands.

35

All these are not half that I owe
 To one, from our earliest youth,
 To me ever ready to show
 Benignity, friendship, and truth;
 For Time, the destroyer declared
 And foe of our perishing kind,
 If even her face he has spared,
 Much less could he alter her mind.

40

Thus compassed about with the goods
 And chattels of leisure and ease,
 I indulge my poetical moods
 In many such fancies as these;
 And fancies I fear they will seem—
 Poets' goods are not often so fine;
 The poets will swear that I dream
 When I sing of the splendour of mine.

50

55

THE POET'S NEW-YEAR'S GIFT.

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON.

MARIA! I have every good
 For thee wished many a time,
 Both sad and in a cheerful mood,
 But never yet in rhyme.

To wish thee fairer is no need,
More prudent, or more sprightly,
Or more ingenious, or more freed
From temper-flaws unsightly.

What favour then not yet possessed
Can I for thee require,
In wedded love already blest,
To thy whole heart's desire?

None here is happy but in part:
Full bliss is bliss divine;
There dwells some wish in every heart,
And doubtless one in thine.

That wish on some fair future day,
Which fate shall brightly gild,
('Tis blameless, be it what it may)
I wish it all fulfilled.

THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT.

FORCED from home and all its pleasures,
Afric's coast I left forlorn;
To increase a stranger's treasures,
O'er the raging billows borne.
Men from England bought and sold me,
Paid my price in paltry gold;
But, though slave they have enrolled me,
Minds are never to be sold.

Still in thought as free as ever,
What are England's rights, I ask,
Me from my delights to sever,
Me to torture, me to task?

5

10

15

20

Fleecy locks and black complexion
 Cannot forfeit Nature's claim;
 Skins may differ, but affection
 Dwells in white and black the same. 15

Why did all-creating Nature
 Make the plant for which we toil?
 Sighs must fan it, tears must water,
 Sweat of ours must dress the soil. 20
 Think, ye masters iron-hearted,
 Lolling at your jovial boards,
 Think how many backs have smarted,
 For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,
 Is there One who reigns on high? 25
 Has He bid you buy and sell us,
 Speaking from his throne, the sky?
 Ask him, if your knotted scourges,
 Matches, blood-extorting screws, 30
 Are the means that duty urges
 Agents of his will to use?

Hark! He answers—Wild tornadoes,
 Strewing yonder sea with wrecks,
 Wasting towns, plantations, meadows, 35
 Are the voice with which He speaks.
 He, foreseeing what vexations
 Afric's sons should undergo,
 Fixed their tyrants' habitations
 Where his whirlwinds answer—'No.' 40

By our blood in Afric wasted,
 Ere our necks received the chain;
 By the miseries that we tasted,
 Crossing in your barks the main;
 By our sufferings, since ye brought us 45
 To the man-degrading mart;
 All sustained by patience, taught us
 Only by a broken heart;

Deem our nation brutes no longer,
Till some reason ye shall find
Worthier of regard, and stronger
Than the colour of our kind.
Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings
Tarnish all your boasted powers,
Prove that you have human feelings,
Ere you proudly question ours!

PITY FOR POOR AFRICANS.

‘Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor.’ [OVID, *Metamorph.* vii. 20.]

I own I am shocked at the purchase of slaves,
And fear those who buy them and sell them, are knaves;
What I hear of their hardships, their tortures, and groans,
Is almost enough to draw pity from stones.

I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,
For how could we do without sugar and rum?
Especially sugar, so needful we see?
What, give up our desserts, our coffee, and tea!

Besides, if we do, the French, Dutch, and Danes
Will heartily thank us, no doubt, for our pains :
If we do not buy the poor creatures, they will,
And tortures and groans will be multiplied still.

If foreigners likewise would give up the trade,
Much more in behalf of your wish might be said:
But while they get riches by purchasing blacks, 15
Pray tell me why we may not also go snacks?

Your scruples and arguments bring to my mind
A story so pat, you may think it is coined,
On purpose to answer you, out of my mint;
But I can assure you I saw it in print. 20

A youngster at school, more sedate than the rest,
Had once his integrity put to the test ;
His comrades had plotted an orchard to rob,
And asked him to go and assist in the job.

He was shocked, sir, like you, and answered—‘Oh no ! 25
What ! rob our good neighbour ! I pray you don’t go ;
Besides the man’s poor, his orchard’s his bread,
Then think of his children, for they must be fed.’

‘You speak very fine, and you look very grave,
But apples we want, and apples we’ll have ; 30
If you will go with us, you shall have a share,
If not, you shall have neither apple nor pear.’

They spoke, and Tom pondered—‘I see they will go :
Poor man ! what a pity to injure him so !
Poor man ! I would save him his fruit if I could, 35
But staying behind will do him no good.

‘If the matter depended alone upon me,
His apples might hang till they dropped from the tree ;
But since they will take them, I think I’ll go too,
He will lose none by me, though I get a few.’ 40

His scruples thus silenced, Tom felt more at ease,
And went with his comrades the apples to seize ;
He blamed and protested, but joined in the plan :
He shared in the plunder, but pitied the man.

THE MORNING DREAM.

‘TWAS in the glad season of spring,
Asleep at the dawn of the day,
I dreamed what I cannot but sing,
So pleasant it seemed as I lay.

I dreamed that, on ocean afloat,
Far hence to the westward I sailed,
While the billows high-lifted the boat,
And the fresh-blowing breeze never failed.

In the steerage a woman I saw,
Such at least was the form that she wore,
Whose beauty impressed me with awe,
Ne'er taught me by woman before.
She sat, and a shield at her side
Shed light, like a sun on the waves,
And smiling divinely, she cried—
'I go to make Freemen of Slaves.'

Then raising her voice to a strain
The sweetest that ear ever heard,
She sung of the slave's broken chain,
Wherever her glory appeared.
Some clouds which had over us hung,
Fled, chased by her melody clear,
And methought while she Liberty sung,
'Twas Liberty only to hear.

Thus swiftly dividing the flood,
To a slave-cultured island we came,
Where a Demon, her enemy, stood—
Oppression his terrible name.
In his hand, as the sign of his sway,
A scourge hung with lashes he bore,
And stood looking out for his prey
From Africa's sorrowful shore.

But soon as approaching the land,
That goddess-like woman he viewed;
The scourge he let fall from his hand,
With blood of his subjects imbrued.
I saw him both sicken and die,
And the moment the monster expired,
Heard shouts that ascended the sky,
From thousands with rapture inspired.

Awaking, how could I but muse
 At what such a dream should betide?
 But soon my ear caught the glad news,
 Which served my weak thought for a guide;—
 That Britannia, renowned o'er the waves, 45
 For the hatred she ever has shown
 To the black-sceptred rulers of slaves,
 Resolves to have none of her own.

ON MRS. MONTAGU'S FEATHER-HANGINGS.

THE Birds put off their every hue,
 To dress a room for Montagu;
 The Peacock sends his heavenly dyes,
 His rainbows and his starry eyes;
 The Pheasant plumes which round infold 5
 His mantling neck with downy gold;
 The Cock his arched tail's azure show;
 And, river-blanch'd, the Swan his snow;
 All tribes beside of Indian name,
 That glossy shine, or vivid flame, 10
 Where rises and where sets the day,
 Whate'er they boast of rich and gay,
 Contribute to the gorgeous plan,
 Proud to advance it all they can.
 This plumage, neither dashing shower, 15
 Nor blasts that shake the dripping bower,
 Shall drench again or discompose,
 But screened from every storm that blows,
 It boasts a splendour ever new,
 Safe with protecting Montagu. 20
 To the same Patroness resort,
 Secure of favour at her court,

Strong Genius, from whose forge of thought
 Forms rise, to quick perfection wrought,
 Which, though new-born, with vigour move, 25
 Like Pallas springing armed from Jove—
 Imagination scattering round
 Wild roses over furrowed ground,
 Which Labour of his frown beguile,
 And teach Philosophy a smile— 30
 Wit flashing on Religion's side,
 Whose fires, to sacred Truth applied,
 The gem, though luminous before,
 Obtrude on human notice more,
 Like sunbeams on the golden height 35
 Of some tall temple playing bright—
 Well tutored Learning, from his books
 Dismissed with grave, not haughty, looks,
 Their order on his shelves exact,
 Nor more harmonious or compact, 40
 Than that to which he keeps confined
 The various treasures of his mind—
 All these to Montagu's repair,
 Ambitious of a shelter there.
 There Genius, Learning, Fancy, Wit, 45
 Their ruffled plumage calm refit,
 (For stormy troubles loudest roar
 Around their flight who highest soar)
 And in her eye, and by her aid,
 Shine safe without a fear to fade. 50

She thus maintains divided sway
 With yon bright regent of the day ;
 The Plume and Poet both we know
 Their lustre to his influence owe ;
 And she the works of Phœbus aiding, 55
 Both Poet saves and Plume from fading.

THE DOG AND THE WATER-LILY.

NO FABLE.

THE noon was shady, and soft airs
 Swept Ouse's silent tide,
 When, 'scaped from literary cares,
 I wandered on his side.

My spaniel, prettiest of his race, 5
 And high in pedigree,
 (Two nymphs adorned with every grace,
 That spaniel found for me)

Now wantoned lost in flags and reeds,
 Now starting into sight, 10
 Pursued the swallow o'er the meads
 With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse displayed
 His lilies newly blown ;
 Their beauties I intent surveyed,
 And one I wished my own. 15

With cane extended far, I sought
 To steer it close to land ;
 But still the prize, though nearly caught,
 Escaped my eager hand. 20

Beau marked my unsuccessful pains
 With fixed considerate face,
 And puzzling set his puppy brains
 To comprehend the case.

But with a cherup clear and strong 25
 Dispersing all his dream,
 I thence withdrew, and followed long
 The windings of the stream.

My ramble ended, I returned,
 Beau trotting far before,
 The floating wreath again discerned,
 And plunging left the shore.

30

I saw him, with that lily cropped,
 Impatient swim to meet
 My quick approach, and soon he dropped
 The treasure at my feet.

35

Charmed with the sight, 'The world,' I cried,
 'Shall hear of this thy deed:
 My dog shall mortify the pride
 Of man's superior breed:

40

'But chief, myself I will enjoin,
 Awake at Duty's call,
 To show a love as prompt as thine
 To Him who gives me all.'

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. THROCK- MORTON'S BULLFINCH.

YE nymphs! if e'er your eyes were red
 With tears o'er hapless favourites shed,
 Oh! share Maria's grief:
 Her favourite, even in his cage,
 (What will not hunger's cruel rage?)

5

Assassined by a thief!

Where Rhenus strays his vines among,
 The egg was laid from which he sprung:
 And though by nature mute,
 Or only with a whistle blessed,
 Well taught, he all the sounds expressed
 Of flageolet or flute.

10

The honours of his ebon poll
Were brighter than the sleekest mole;
 His bosom of the hue
With which Aurora decks the skies,
When piping winds shall soon arise,
 To sweep away the dew.

Above, below, in all the house,
Dire foe alike of bird and mouse,
 No cat had leave to dwell;
And Bully's cage supported stood
On props of smoothest shaven wood,
 Large built and latticed well.

Well latticed—but the grate, alas!
Not rough with wire of steel or brass,
For Bully's plumage sake,
But smooth with wands from Ouse's side,
With which, when neatly peeled and dried,
The swains their baskets make.

Night veiled the pole; all seemed secure;
When, led by instinct sharp and sure,
 Subsistence to provide,
A beast forth sallied on the scout,
Long backed, long tailed, with whiskered snout, 35
 And badger-coloured hide.

He, entering at the study door,
Its ample area 'gan explore;
And something in the wind
Conjectured, sniffing round and round,
Better than all the books he found,
Food chiefly for the mind.

Just then, by adverse fate impressed,
A dream disturbed poor Bully's rest;

In sleep he seemed to view
A rat fast clinging to the cage,
And screaming at the sad presage,
Awoke and found it true.

45

For aided both by ear and scent,
Right to his mark the monster went—

50

Ah, Muse! forbear to speak
Minute the horrors that ensued;
His teeth were strong, the cage was wood—
He left poor Bully's beak.

Oh, had he made that too his prey!
That beak, whence issued many a lay
Of such mellifluous tone,
Might have repaid him well, I wote,
For silencing so sweet a throat,
Fast stuck within his own.

55

60

Maria weeps—the Muses mourn—
So when, by Bacchanalians torn,
On Thracian Hebrus' side
The tree-enchanter Orpheus fell,
His head alone remained to tell
The cruel death he died.

65

ON THE
RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE
OUT OF NORFOLK,
THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN, ANN BODHAM.

OH that those lips had language! Life has passed
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,

5

'Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!'
 The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
 (Blest be the Art that can immortalize,—
 The Art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
 To quench it) here shines on me still the same.

10

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
 O welcome guest, though unexpected, here!
 Who bidst me honour with an artless song,
 Affectionate, a mother lost so long.

I will obey, not willingly alone,
 But gladly, as the precept were her own:
 And while that face renews my filial grief,
 Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,—
 Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
 A momentary dream, that thou art she.

15

My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,
 Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
 Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
 Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
 Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss;
 Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
 Ah, that maternal smile! it answers—'Yes.'
 I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,
 I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
 And, turning from my nursery window, drew
 A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!

25

But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone
 Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown;
 May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
 The parting word shall pass my lips no more!
 Thy maidens grieved themselves at my concern,
 Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
 What ardently I wished, I long believed,
 And, disappointed still, was still deceived;
 By expectation every day beguiled,
 Dupe of to-morrow even from a child.
 Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
 Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,

30

35

40

I learned at last submission to my lot,
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot. 45

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapped 50
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capped,
'Tis now become a history little known,

That once we called the pastoral house our own.
Shortlived possession! but the record fair,
That memory keeps of all thy kindness there, 55
Still outlives many a storm that has effaced
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.

Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou mightest know me safe and warmly laid;
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home, 60
The biscuit, or confectionary plum;
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed

By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed:
All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall, 65
Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and breaks,

That humour interposed too often makes;
All this still legible in Memory's page,
And still to be so to my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay 70
Such honours to thee as my numbers may;
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,

Not scorned in Heaven, though little noticed here.

Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers, 75
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
I pricked them into paper with a pin,
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile),
Could those few pleasant days again appear, 80
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?

I would not trust my heart—the dear delight
 Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.—
 But no—what here we call our life is such,
 So little to be loved, and thou so much,
 That I should ill requite thee, to constrain
 Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

85

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
 (The storms all weathered and the ocean crossed)

90

Shoots into port at some well-havened isle,
 Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
 There sits quiescent on the floods that show
 Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
 While airs impregnated with incense play

Around her, fanning light her streamers gay;—

95

So thou, with sails how swift! hast reached the shore,
 'Where tempests never beat nor billows roar;'

And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
 Of life, long since has anchored by thy side.

But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,

100

Always from port withheld, always distressed—

Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-tossed,
 Sails ripped, seams opening wide, and compass lost,
 And day by day some current's thwarting force
 Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.

105

Yet oh the thought, that thou art safe, and he!

That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.

My boast is not that I deduce my birth

From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth ;
 But higher far my proud pretensions rise—

110

The son of parents passed into the skies.

And now, Farewell.—Time unrevoked has run
 His wonted course, yet what I wished is done.

By Contemplation's help, not sought in vain,

I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again ;
 To have renewed the joys that once were mine,

115

Without the sin of violating thine;

And while the wings of Fancy still are free,
 And I can view this mimic show of thee,

Time has but half succeeded in his theft—
Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

120

THE JUDGMENT OF THE POETS.

Two Nymphs, both nearly of an age,
Of numerous charms possessed,
A warm dispute once chanced to wage,
Whose temper was the best.

The worth of each had been complete,
Had both alike been mild:

But one, although her smile was sweet,
Frowned oftener than she smiled.

And in her humour, when she frowned,
Would raise her voice, and roar,
And shake with fury to the ground,
The garland that she wore.

The other was of gentler cast,
From all such frenzy clear,
Her frowns were seldom known to last,
And never proved severe.

To poets of renown in song
The Nymphs referred the cause,
Who, strange to tell, all judged it wrong,
And gave misplaced applause.

They gentle called, and kind and soft,
The flippant and the scold,
And though she changed her mood so oft,
That failing left untold.

No judges, sure, were e'er so mad,
Or so resolved to err—
In short, the charms her sister had
They lavished all on her.

5

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25

Then thus the god whom fondly they
 Their great inspirer call,
 Was heard, one genial summer's day,
 To reprimand them all.

30

‘ Since thus ye have combined,’ he said,
 ‘ My favourite Nymph to slight,
 ‘ Adorning May, that pæevish maid,
 ‘ With June’s undoubted right,

35

‘ The minx shall, for your folly’s sake,
 ‘ Still prove herself a shrew,
 ‘ Shall make your scribbling fingers ache,
 ‘ And pinch your noses blue.’

40

YARDLEY OAK.

SURVIVOR sole, and hardly such, of all
 That once lived here thy brethren! At my birth
 (Since which I number threescore winters past),
 A shattered veteran, hollow-trunked perhaps,
 As now, and with excoriate forks deform,
 Relics of ages! Could a mind, imbued
 With truth from heaven, created thing adore,
 I might with reverence kneel, and worship thee.

5

It seems idolatry with some excuse,
 When our forefather Druids in their oaks
 Imagined sanctity. The conscience, yet
 Unpurified by an authentic act
 Of amnesty, the meed of blood divine,
 Loved not the light, but, gloomy, into gloom
 Of thickest shades, like Adam after taste
 Of fruit proscribed, as to a refuge, fled.

10

Thou wast a bauble once, a cup and ball
 Which babes might play with; and the thievish jay,
 Seeking her food, with ease might have purloined
 The auburn nut that held thee, swallowing down

15

20

Thy yet close-folded latitude of boughs,
 And all thine embryo vastness, at a gulp.
 But Fate thy growth decreed; autumnal rains
 Beneath thy parent tree mellowed the soil
 Designed thy cradle; and a skipping deer,
 With pointed hoof dibbling the glebe, prepared
 The soft receptacle, in which, secure,
 Thy rudiments should sleep the winter through.

So Fancy dreams. Disprove it, if ye can,
 Ye reasoners broad awake, whose busy search
 Of argument, employed too oft amiss,
 Sifts half the pleasures of short life away!

Thou fellest mature; and, in the loamy clod,
 Swelling with vegetative force instinct,
 Didst burst thine egg, as theirs the fabled twins,
 Now stars; two lobes, protruding, paired exact;
 A leaf succeeded, and another leaf,
 And, all the elements thy puny growth
 Fostering propitious, thou becamest a twig.

Who lived when thou wast such? Oh, couldst thou speak,
 As in Dodona once thy kindred trees,
 Oracular, I would not curious ask
 The future, best unknown, but, at thy mouth
 Inquisitive, the less ambiguous past.

By thee I might correct, erroneous oft,
 The clock of history, facts and events
 Timing more punctual, unrecorded facts
 Recovering, and misstated setting right—
 Desperate attempt, till trees shall speak again!

Time made thee what thou wast, king of the woods; 50
 And Time hath made thee what thou art—a cave
 For owls to roost in. Once thy spreading boughs
 O'erhung the champaign; and the numerous flock
 That grazed it stood beneath that ample cope
 Uncrowded, yet safe sheltered from the storm. 55
 No flock frequents thee now. Thou hast outlived
 Thy popularity, and art become
 (Unless verse rescue thee awhile) a thing

Forgotten, as the foliage of thy youth.

While thus through all the stages thou hast pushed 60
 Of treeship—first a seedling, hid in grass;
 Then twig; then sapling; and, as century rolled
 Slow after century, a giant bulk
 Of girth enormous, with moss-cushioned root
 Upheaved above the soil, and sides embossed 65
 With prominent wens globose; till at the last
 The rottenness, which time is charged to inflict
 On other mighty ones, found also thee.

What exhibitions various hath the world

Witnessed, of mutability in all 70
 That we account most durable below!
 Change is the diet on which all subsist,
 Created changeable, and change at last
 Destroys them—skies uncertain, now the heat
 Transmitting cloudless, and the solar beam 75
 Now quenching in a boundless sea of clouds—
 Calm and alternate storm, moisture, and drought,
 Invigorate by turns the springs of life
 In all that live, plant, animal, and man,
 And in conclusion mar them. Nature's threads, 80
 Fine passing thought, e'en in her coarsest works,
 Delight in agitation, yet sustain
 The force that agitates not unimpaired;
 But worn by frequent impulse, to the cause
 Of their best tone their dissolution owe. 85

Thought cannot spend itself, comparing still
 The great and little of thy lot, thy growth
 From almost nullity into a state
 Of matchless grandeur, and declension thence,
 Slow, into such magnificent decay. 90

Time was when, settling on thy leaf, a fly
 Could shake thee to the root—and time has been
 When tempests could not. At thy firmest age
 Thou hadst within thy bole solid contents
 That might have ribbed the sides and planked the deck
 Of some flagged admiral; and tortuous arms, 96

The shipwright's darling treasure, didst present
 To the four-quartered winds, robust and bold,
 Warped into tough knee-timber, many a load!
 But the axe spared thee. In those thriftier days 100
 Oaks fell not, hewn by thousands, to supply
 The bottomless demands of contest waged
 For senatorial honours. Thus to Time
 The task was left to whittle thee away
 With his sly scythe, whose ever-nibbling edge, 105
 Noiseless, an atom, and an atom more,
 Disjoining from the rest, has unobserved,
 Achieved a labour which had, far and wide,
 By man performed, made all the forest ring.

Embowelled now, and of thy ancient self 110
 Possessing naught but the scooped rind that seems
 A huge throat calling to the clouds for drink,
 Which it would give in rivulets to thy root,
 Thou temptest none, but rather much forbiddest
 The feller's toil which thou couldst ill requite. 115
 Yet is thy root sincere, sound as the rock,
 A quarry of stout spurs and knotted fangs,
 Which, crooked into a thousand whimsies, clasp
 The stubborn soil, and hold thee still erect.

So stands a kingdom, whose foundation yet 120
 Fails not, in virtue and in wisdom laid,
 Though all the superstructure, by the tooth
 Pulverized of venality, a shell
 Stands now, and semblance only of itself!

Thine arms have left thee. Winds have rent them off 125
 Long since, and rovers of the forest wild
 With bow and shaft have burnt them. Some have left
 A splintered stump bleached to a snowy white;
 And some memorial none where once they grew.

Yet Life still lingers in thee, and puts forth 130
 Proof not contemptible of what she can,
 Even where Death predominates. The spring
 Finds thee not less alive to her sweet force
 Than yonder upstarts of the neighbouring wood,

So much thy juniors, who their birth received
Half a millennium since the date of thine.

135

But since, although well qualified by age
To teach, no Spirit dwells in thee, nor voice
May be expected from thee, seated here
On thy distorted root, with hearers none,
Or prompter, save the scene, I will perform
Myself the oracle, and will discourse
In my own ear such matter as I may.

140

One man alone, the father of us all,
Drew not his life from woman; never gazed,
With mute unconsciousness of what he saw,
On all around him; learned not by degrees,
Nor owed articulation to his ear;
But moulded by his Maker into man
At once, upstood intelligent, surveyed
All creatures, with precision understood
Their purport, uses, properties, resigned
To each his name significant, and filled
With love and wisdom, rendered back to Heaven
In praise harmonious the first air he drew.
He was excused the penalties of dull
Minority. No tutor charged his hand
With the thought-tracing quill, or tasked his mind
With problems. History, not wanted yet,
Leaned on her elbow, watching Time, whose course
Eventful, should supply her with a theme; . . .

145

150

155

160

THE RETIRED CAT.

A POET'S cat, sedate and grave
As poet well could wish to have,
Was much addicted to inquire
For nooks to which she might retire,
And where, secure as mouse in chink,
She might repose, or sit and think.

5

I know not where she caught the trick—

Nature perhaps herself had cast her
In such a mould philosophique,

Or else she learned it of her master.

10

Sometimes ascending, debonair,
An apple tree, or lofty pear,

Lodged with convenience in the fork,
She watched the gardener at his work;

Sometimes her ease and solace sought

15

In an old empty watering pot;

There, wanting nothing save a fan,

To seem some nymph in her sedan

Apparelled in exactest sort,

And ready to be borne to court.

20

But love of change, it seems, has place,

Not only in our wiser race;

Cats also feel, as well as we,

That passion's force, and so did she.

Her climbing, she began to find,

25

Exposed her too much to the wind,

And the old utensil of tin

Was cold and comfortless within:

She therefore wished instead of those

Some place of more serene repose,

30

Where neither cold might come, nor air

Too rudely wanton with her hair,

And sought it in the likeliest mode

Within her master's snug abode.

A drawer, it chanced, at bottom lined

35

With linen of the softest kind,

With such as merchants introduce

From India, for the ladies' use,

A drawer impending o'er the rest,

Half open in the topmost chest,

40

Of depth enough, and none to spare,

Invited her to slumber there;

Puss with delight beyond expression

Surveyed the scene, and took possession.

Recumbent at her ease, ere long,
And lulled by her own humdrum song,
She left the cares of life behind,
And slept as she would sleep her last,
When in came, housewifely inclined,
The chambermaid, and shut it fast;
By no malignity impelled,
But all unconscious whom it held.

Awakened by the shock (cried Puss)
'Was ever cat attended thus?
'The open drawer was left, I see,
'Merely to prove a nest for me,
'For soon as I was well composed,
'Then came the maid, and it was closed,
'How smooth these 'kerchiefs, and how sweet!
'Oh what a delicate retreat!
'I will resign myself to rest
'Till Sol, declining in the west,
'Shall call to supper, when, no doubt,
'Susan will come and let me out.'

The evening came, the sun descended,
And Puss remained still unattended.
The night rolled tardily away,
(With her indeed 'twas never day),
The sprightly morn her course renewed,
The evening gray again ensued,
And puss came into mind no more
Than if entombed the day before.
With hunger pinched, and pinched for room,
She now presaged approaching doom,
Nor slept a single wink, or purred,
Conscious of jeopardy incurred.

That night, by chance, the poet watching,
Heard an inexplicable scratching;
His noble heart went pit-a-pat,
And to himself he said—'What's that?'
He drew the curtain at his side,
And forth he peeped, but nothing spied.

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Yet, by his ear directed, guessed
Something imprisoned in the chest,
And, doubtful what, with prudent care
Resolved it should continue there. 85

At length a voice which well he knew,
A long and melancholy mew,
Saluting his poetic ears,
Consoled him and dispelled his fears: 90

He left his bed, he trod the floor,
He 'gan in haste the drawers explore,
The lowest first, and without stop
The rest in order to the top.

For 'tis a truth well known to most,
That whatsoever thing is lost, 95
We seek it, ere it come to light,
In every cranny but the right.

Forth skipped the cat, not now replete
As erst with airy self-conceit, 100
Nor in her own fond apprehension
A theme for all the world's attention
But modest, sober, cured of all
Her notions hyperbolical,
And wishing for a place of rest
Anything rather than a chest. 105

Then stepped the poet into bed,
With this reflection in his head.

MORAL.

Beware of too sublime a sense
Of your own worth and consequence: 110
The man who dreams himself so great
And his importance of such weight,
That all around, in all that's done,
Must move and act for him alone,
Will learn in school of tribulation
The folly of his expectation. 115

EPITAPH ON A FREE BUT TAME
REDBREAST,

A FAVOURITE OF MISS SALLY HURDIS.

THESE are not dewdrops, these are tears,
And tears by Sally shed,
For absent Robin, who she fears,
With too much cause, is dead.

One morn he came not to her hand
As he was wont to come,
And, on her finger perched, to stand
Picking his breakfast-crumb.

Alarmed, she called him, and perplexed
She sought him, but in vain—
That day he came not, nor the next,
Nor ever came again.

She therefore raised him here a tomb,
Though where he fell, or how,
None knows, so secret was his doom,
Nor where he moulders now.

Had half a score of coxcombs died
In social Robin's stead,
Poor Sally's tears had soon been dried,
Or haply never shed.

But Bob was neither rudely bold
Nor spiritlessly tame;
Nor was, like theirs, his bosom cold,
But always in a flame.

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TO MRS. UNWIN.

MARY! I want a lyre with other strings,
 Such aid from Heaven as some have feigned they drew,
 An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new,
 And undebased by praise of meaner things,
 That, ere through age or woe I shed my wings, 5
 I may record thy worth with honour due,
 In verse as musical as thou art true,
 Verse that immortalizes whom it sings!
 But thou hast little need. There is a book
 By seraphs writ with beams of heavenly light, 10
 On which the eyes of God not rarely look,
 A chronicle of actions just and bright;
 There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine,
 And, since thou ownest that praise, I spare thee mine.

A TALE.

IN Scotland's realm, where trees are few,
 Nor even shrubs abound;
 But where, however bleak the view,
 Some better things are found.

For husband there and wife may boast 5
 Their union undefiled,
 And false ones are as rare almost
 As hedgerows in the wild.

In Scotland's realm, forlorn and bare,
 This history chanced of late—
 This history of a wedded pair, 10
 A chaffinch and his mate.

The spring drew near, each felt a breast
 With genial instinct filled;
 They paired, and would have built a nest,
 But found not where to build.

15

The heaths uncovered and the moors
 Except with snow and sleet,
 Sea-beaten rocks and naked shores
 Could yield them no retreat.

20

Long-time a breeding-place they sought,
 Till both grew vexed and tired;
 At length a ship arriving brought
 The good so long desired.

A ship!—Could such a restless thing
 Afford them place of rest?
 Or was the merchant charged to bring
 The homeless birds a nest?

25

Hush—silent hearers profit most—
 This racer of the sea
 Proved kinder to them than the coast,
 It served them with a tree.

30

But such a tree! 'twas shaven deal,
 The tree they call a mast,
 And had a hollow with a wheel
 Through which the tackle passed.

35

Within that cavity aloft
 Their roofless home they fixed,
 Formed with materials neat and soft,
 Bents, wool, and feathers mixed.

40

Four ivory eggs soon pave its floor
 With russet specks bedight—
 The vessel weighs, forsakes the shore,
 And lessens to the sight.

The mother-bird is gone to sea,
As she had changed her kind;
But goes the male? Far wiser, he
Is doubtless left behind.

No! Soon as from ashore he saw
The winged mansion move,
He flew to reach it, by a law
Of never failing love.

Then, perching at his consort's side,
Was briskly borne along,
The billows and the blast defied,
And cheered her with a song.

The seaman, with sincere delight,
His feathered shipmates eyes,
Scarce less exulting in the sight,
Than when he tows a prize.

For seamen much believe in signs,
And from a chance so new
Each some approaching good divines,
And may his hopes be true!

Hail, honoured land! a desert where
Not even birds can hide;
Yet parent of this loving pair
Whom nothing could divide.

And ye, who, rather than resign
Your matrimonial plan,
Were not afraid to plough the brine,
In company with man.

For whose lean country much disdain
We English often show,
Yet from a richer nothing gain
But wantonness and woe.

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Be it your fortune, year by year,
 The same resource to prove,
 And may ye, sometimes landing here,
 Instruct us how to love !

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TO MARY.

THE twentieth year is well nigh past,
 Since first our sky was overcast ;
 Ah would that this might be the last !

My Mary !

Thy spirits have a fainter flow, 5
 I see thee daily weaker grow—
 'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
 My Mary !

Thy needles, once a shining store,
 For my sake restless heretofore, 10
 Now rust disused, and shine no more,
 My Mary !

For though thou gladly wouldest fulfill
 The same kind office for me still,
 Thy sight now seconds not thy will,
 My Mary !

15

But well thou playedst the housewife's part,
 And all thy threads with magic art
 Have wound themselves about this heart,
 My Mary !

20

Thy indistinct expressions seem
 Like language uttered in a dream ;
 Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
 My Mary !

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary!

25

For, could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see?
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!

30

Partakers of thy sad decline,
Thy hands their little force resign ;
Yet gently pressed, press gently mine,
My Mary!

35

Such feebleness of limbs thou provest,
That now at every step thou movest
Upheld by two; yet still thou lovest,
My Mary!

40

And still to love, though pressed with ill,
In wintry age to feel no chill,
With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know,
How oft the sadness that I show
Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,
My Mary!

45

And should my future lot be cast
With much resemblance of the past,
Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary!

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THE CASTAWAY.

OBSCUREST night involved the sky,
 The Atlantic billows roared,
 When such a destined wretch as I,
 Washed headlong from on board,
 Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
 His floating home for ever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
 Than he with whom he went,
 Nor ever ship left Albion's coast
 With warmer wishes sent.
 He loved them both, but both in vain,
 Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine,
 Expert to swim, he lay;
 Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
 Or courage die away;
 But waged with Death a lasting strife,
 Supported by despair of life.

He shouted; nor his friends had failed
 To check the vessel's course,
 But so the furious blast prevailed,
 That, pitiless perforce,
 They left their outcast mate behind,
 And scudded still before the wind.

Some succour yet they could afford;
 And, such as storms allow,
 The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
 Delayed not to bestow:

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But he, they knew, nor ship nor shore,
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

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Nor, cruel as it seemed, could he
Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight, in such a sea,
Alone could rescue them:
Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

35

He long survives, who lives an hour
In ocean, self-upheld:
And so long he, with unspent power,
His destiny repelled:
And ever, as the minutes flew,
Entreated 'Help!' or cried—'Adieu!'

40

At length, his transient respite past,
His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in every blast,
Could catch the sound no more:
For then, by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

45

No poet wept him; but the page
Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
Is wet with Anson's tear:
And tears by bards or heroes shed
Alike immortalize the dead.

50

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
A more enduring date:
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case.

55

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No voice divine the storm allayed,
No light propitious shone:
When, snatched from all effectual aid,
We perished, each alone:
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelmed in deeper gulfs than he.

NOTES.

THE TASK.

Begun in June or July 1783; finished in August or September 1784. It was offered to J. Johnson for publication in October 1784, but not published till July 1785. Both the subject and the metre were suggested by Lady Austen: see *Life*, p. xxix. 'If the work cannot boast a regular plan, (in which respect, however, I do not think it altogether indefensible,) it may yet boast, that the reflections are naturally suggested always by the preceding passage, and that except the fifth book, which is rather of a political aspect, the whole has one tendency—to discountenance the modern enthusiasm after a London life, and to recommend rural ease and leisure as friendly to the cause of piety and virtue.'—*Cowper to Unwin*, Oct. 1784 (S. iii. 139*). 'It does not appear to me,' wrote Cowper to Newton, Dec. 11, 1784, 'that because I performed more than my task, therefore *The Task* is not a suitable title. A house would still be a house, though the builder of it should make it ten times as big as he at first intended.'

Book I.—The Sofa.

Begun in June or July, and finished in the beginning of August 1783. In vindication of the title, Cowper wrote to Newton, Dec. 11, 1784, 'it seemed almost necessary to accommodate the name to the incident that gave birth to the poem . . . Had I set off with a design to write upon a gridiron, and had I actually written near two hundred lines upon that utensil, as I have upon the *Sofa*, the *Gridiron* should have been my title.'

1. 1. Cp. the opening of *Paradise Regained*, and of the *Faery Queene*; all three being imitations of the introductory verses prefixed to *Virgil's Aeneid*.

* The references are to volume and page of *Southey's Works of William Cowper*, ed. Bohn (Standard Library), 1853-5, in eight volumes. Where the Letters are quoted, the date alone is given; as they will be found in *Southey* in their chronological order.

l. 2. *Truth, Hope, and Charity.* See in vol. i. the three poems so named, published by Cowper in 1782; and cp. Life, p. xxvi.

l. 4. *adventurous flight.* Cp. Par. Lost, i. 13:

‘My adventurous song,

That with no middle flight intends to soar;
and the same, Bk. iii. 13:

‘Thee I revisit now with bolder wing,
Escaped the Stygian pool.’

l. 7. *The Fair;*—Lady Austen. See Life, p. xxix.

l. 9. Cp. Expostulation, l. 486.

l. 10. ‘As yet this world was not.’—Paradise Lost, v. 577.

l. 22. We have all seen pictures of Alfred the Great sitting on a three-legged stool. We are not however to conclude that the chair with four legs did not exist in his days. For ‘we find chairs of different forms in the illuminations of Anglo-Saxon MSS., but they are always represented as the seats of persons of high rank and dignity, and usually of kings.’—T. Wright’s History of Domestic Manners and Sentiments, 1862, pp. 41, 42; where three examples are figured. These examples are all of them four-legged chairs; and ‘although very simple in form, are furnished with cushions.’ They were called *sells*, or *stols* (whence our ‘stool’).

l. 30. The word *vermicular* seems to mean no more than twisted spirally, like a ‘worm’ (Latin *vermis*). But Mr. Bell informs us, ‘The species of rustic work to which this term is technically applied is made to have the appearance of having been eaten by worms, so that the stage of improvement in the construction of stools here described, is represented as having been an imitation of the actual work of destruction that had been wrought on its three-legged predecessors.’—(Poems of Cowper, vol. ii. p. 188.)

l. 32. Observe the classical use (uncommon in English) of the verb ‘to induce,’ meaning to overlay, as with a covering. Cp. Virgil, Georgics, i. 196:

‘Deinde satis fluvium inducit rivosque sequentes;’
which Phillips has imitated in his poem on Cider:

‘There are who, fondly studious of increase,
Rich foreign mould in their matured land
Induce laborious.’

ll. 34–8. Cp. Bk. iv. 150–5.

l. 44. *Restless;*—here used with an active meaning, as ‘affording no rest.’ So in Richard the Third, i. 2, the ‘helpless balm’ is the tear which brings no help: and in Venus and Adonis, st. 101, the ‘helpless berries’ are the ‘painted grapes,’ which afford no relief to the hungry birds.

l. 54. *Crewel;*—fine worsted, chiefly used for working and embroidery. Beaumont and Fletcher speak of ‘a skein of crimson crewel,’ used as a hatband (Noble Gent., v. 1), and Izaak Walton bids the angler ‘take silk

or crewel, and make these fast at the bent of the hook.' In Shirley's comedy of *The Bird in a Cage*, 1633 (Dodsley's *Old Plays*, viii. 270), we read of the 'silk and crewel gentlemen in the hangings,' viz. the tapestried figures 'in the arras.' The custom of wearing garters of crewel is often punningly alluded to by our old dramatists. Thus in *King Lear*, ii. 4, the Fool exclaims, 'Ha, ha! look! he wears cruel garters.' and Ben Jonson has, in *The Alchemist*, i. 2:

'Ere we contribute a new crewell garter
To his mostworsted worship.'

The crewel mentioned by Cowper was twisted up into knots or tufts on the stuffed seats and backs of armchairs, instead of the buttons now more commonly used.

l. 55. From *Par. Lost*, ii. 666:

'The other shape,
If shape it might be call'd, that shape had none.'

l. 59. Cp. Congreve's *Mourning Bride*, ii. 3 (ed. 1728);

'Its arch'd and ponderous roof,
By its own weight made steadfast and unmoveable.'

l. 78. The 'Two Kings of Brentford' are characters in *The Rehearsal*; a farce written by Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, with assistance from Butler, Sprat, and others, as a satire on the rhyming tragedies of the day: London, 1672, 4to. In Act i. (p. 6) Bayes explains, 'The chief hindge of this Play is, that I suppose two Kings to be of one place: as, for example, at *Brentforde* . . . the people having the same relations to 'em both, the same affections, the same duty, the same obedience . . . these Kings concern'd in a reciprocal regard, as well to their own interest, as the good of the people.' In Act ii. Sc. 2, the stage direction is, 'Enter the two Kings, hand in hand;' and here it seems to have been a traditional piece of acting, that they should be also 'smelling at one rose.' In Act iii. 1, when asked, 'But why two Kings of the same place?' Bayes replies, 'Why? because it is new, and that's it I aim at. I despise your *Johnson* and *Beaumont*, that borrow'd all they writ from nature. I am for fetching it purely out of my own fancie, I.' This farce was aimed chiefly against Dryden; and Villiers himself is said to have drilled Lacey (who acted Bayes) to mimic the manner of the Laureate, who long retained the nickname of Bayes. The popularity of this play was such, that not only the Two Kings, but Bayes himself, and Drawcansir, became proverbial names. We happen to know that Cowper was familiar with *The Rehearsal*; for he quotes it by name in more than one of his letters (e. g. *To Unwin*, S. iii. 344).

ll. 89-102. For replicatory verses of this kind, cp. *Par. Lost*, iv. 641-56; x. 1086-1104; *Comus*, ll. 221-4; and *As You Like It*, ii. 7:

'Orl. If ever you have look'd on better days,
If ever been where bells have knell'd to church,' &c.

'Duke. True is it that we have seen better days,
And have with holy bell been knell'd to church;' &c.

ll. 90-7. Cp. Elizabeth Barrett Browning: *A Night Watch by the Sea*:
'The nurse that came for hire nods beside the sick man's fire,
Whose eyes grow dark and lose her;
Nods the nurse to every tone, little thinking how upon
Her charge, the death is winning,—
While the sick man, dreamingly, takes the rushing of the sea
For Eternity beginning.'

l. 95. Cp. Tennyson's *Northern Farmer*, st. 5:

'An' I hallus coom'd to's choorch afoor moy Sally wúr dëad,
An' 'eard 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock ower my 'eäd.'

l. 131. Cp. Bk. vi. 995; Horace, Lib. ii. Epist. 2, 55:
'Singula de nobis anni praedantur euntes,'

Pope, *Imit. of Horace*, Epist. ii. 2, 72:

'Years following years steal something every day';
and Young's *Love of Fame*, Satire v. (*apud* S. vi. 6);

'Not numerous are our joys when life is new,
And yearly some are failing of the few.'

l. 145. This graceful record of affection for Mrs. Unwin was probably added in a revisal, between 1783 (when *The Task* was commenced) and 1785 (when it was published). Cowper first met Mary Unwin a few weeks after he settled at Huntingdon, June 22, 1765. See *Life*, p. xix.

l. 154. Here follows an exact description of a walk across the fields from Olney to Weston. There is a gradual ascent to the 'eminence,'—a hill on the grounds of Weston House overlooking the Ouse, and known as 'The Cliff.'

l. 157. Cp. Wordsworth, *Daffodils*:

'They flash upon that inward eye,
Which is the bliss of solitude.'

l. 162. Cp. *King Lear*, iv. 6:

'And yon tall anchoring bark,
Diminish'd to her cock; her cock, a buoy
Almost too small for sight.'

l. 167. Here is an error. The 'elms' should be 'poplars.' The editor of *Cowper Illustrated* (Lond. 1803, p. 45), says, 'We have received a communication from Mr. Courtenay, who observes, that Cowper wrote the passage which refers to these trees, under the influence of a mistake, and he had often told him of the circumstance.'

l. 173. *square tower*;—of the Church of Clifton Reynes, one mile to the east of Olney.

l. 174. *tall spire*;—of Olney Church. *Bells*;—cp. Bk. vi. 6-12.

l. 176. *villages*;—namely, Steventon and Emberton.

l. 178. Cp. Hor. Ars. Poet., 365:

‘Haec placuit semel, haec decies repetita placebit.’

Cowper wrote to Lady Hesketh, May 1, 1786: ‘Weston, which is our pleasantest retreat of all, is a mile off. Mrs. Unwin and I have for many years walked thither every day in the year, when the weather would permit.’ And to Unwin, Aug. 1, 1784: ‘Your mother and I continue to visit Weston daily, and find in those agreeable bowers such amusement as leaves us but little room to regret that we can go no further.’

l. 183. Cp. Wordsworth’s Excursion, Bk. iv. 29:

‘Sustain, Thou only canst, the sick of heart,
Restore their languid spirits, and recall
Their lost affections unto Thee and Thine.’

l. 188. Cp. Longfellow’s Voices of the Night, Prelude:

‘Beneath some patriarchal tree
I lay upon the ground;
His hoary arms uplifted he,
And all the broad leaves over me
Clapp’d their little hands in glee,
With one continuous sound.’

l. 196. Cp. Wordsworth’s Excursion, Bk. iii. 984:

‘That, by their onward lapse
Betray to sight the motion of the stream,
Else imperceptible.’

l. 200. Cp. Par. Lost, iv. 601:

‘Those to their nests
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale;
She all night long her amorous descant sung.’

And the same, Bk. vii. 433:

‘From branch to branch the smaller birds with song
Solaced the woods, and spread their painted wings
Till even, nor then the solemn nightingale
Ceased warbling, but all night tuned her soft lays.’

l. 202. See Richard Crashaw’s exquisite poem, Music’s Duel, describing the contest between a nightingale and ‘a sweet lute’s master’; and cp. John Fo treatment of the same theme in The Lover’s Melancholy (1628), act i. sc. i.

l. 227. *Peasant’s nest*;—now a farmstead; no longer thatched, but tiled; with a well sunk, and the surrounding trees cleared.

l. 235. Cp. Bacon, ‘Silence is the rest of the soul, and refreshes invention’ Thomson’s Seasons, Summer, ll. 522-37:

‘These are the haunts of Meditation,’ &c.

Pope’s Imit. of Horace, Bk. ii. Epist. 2, 110:

‘Alas! to grottos and to groves we run,
To ease and silence, every Muse’s son.’

l. 252. By the *Colonade* is meant an avenue of fine chestnut trees, leading up to the Rustic Bridge.

l. 260. The word *umbrella* (a 'little shade'—dimin.; from Latin *umbra*) as used here and in Bk. iv. 552, seems to denote a sun-shade or parasol. Umbrellas have been used for this purpose in the East from time immemorial; and they are found carved on the bas-reliefs at Persepolis. But the common use of them by men in this country, as a protection from rain, dates from Cowper's own days. The old dictionaries of Florio, Phillips, and Bailey show us that the 'umbrella'—otherwise called 'umbrel,' or 'umbrello'—was imported from Italy for the use of *women*, as a defence against both sun and rain, in the seventeenth century, or even the latter part of the sixteenth. Swift's Description of a City Shower, in *The Tatler*, No. 238 (Oct. 1710), informs us that even

‘The tuck'd-up sempstress walks with halting strides,

While streams run down her oil'd umbrella's sides;’

but that its use was still confined to women appears from Gay's *Trivia* (1712), Bk. i. 217:

‘Britain in winter only knows its aid,

To guard from chilly showers the walking maid.’

Jonas Hanway, the philanthropic founder of the Magdalen Hospital (born 1712, died 1786) is said to have been the first man who carried an umbrella for rain, in the streets of London. He was a Russia merchant, and published an account of his Travels in Persia in 1753; and it was probably about this date that he introduced this adaptation of the Oriental custom to our climate. Horace Walpole, describing the punishment of Dr. Shebbeare for libel, Dec. 5, 1758, says, 'The man stood in the pillory, having a footman holding an umbrella to keep off the rain.' (*Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, iii. 153). This umbrella was specially noticed by Mr. Justice Dennison, in the judgment which he pronounced against Arthur Beardmore, the Under-Sheriff, of Middlesex, for contempt of court in remitting a part of the Doctor's sentence. The first umbrella seen in Bristol was red, and came from Leghorn in 1780 (*Notes and Queries*, 1st ser., ii. 491); and the first in Glasgow was brought from Paris by Dr. Jamieson in 1782 (*Ibid.* I. ii. 25).

l. 262. *Benevolus* ;—‘John Courtenay Throckmorton, Esq., of Weston Underwood’—C. He succeeded his grandfather Sir Robert, as fifth Baronet of Coughton Court, co. Warwick, in 1791; and dying without issue in 1819, was succeeded by his brother Sir George, sixth Baronet, ‘You say well, that in Mr. Throckmorton we have a peerless neighbour; we have so. In point of information upon all important subjects, in respect too of expression and address, and in short, everything that enters into the idea of a gentleman, I have not found his equal.’—*To Lady Hesketh*, Dec. 4, 1787. Weston came to this family through the marriage of Thomas Throckmorton, High Sheriff of Warwick and Leicester in 5 Edw. IV., with Margaret, daughter and coheir of Sir Robert Olney of Weston, Knight.

l. 267. The Bridge spanned a brook, which, after winding through the park, crossed the road leading from Olney to Northampton, at a place called Overs-Bridge.

l. 268. Cp. Hamlet, iv. 7 :

‘There is a willow grows ascanst the brook,’ &c.

l. 278. Ascending from the Rustic Bridge, along the northern boundary of the park, a walk ‘under oaks and elms’ through which is seen ‘the embattled tower’ of Emberton Church (see Bk. vi. 57-82), leads up to the Alcove. This was a covered seat or summer-house, which crowned the summit. It had six sides or compartments, of which three were left open for the purpose of viewing the surrounding scenery.

l. 283. Cp. Gray’s Elegy, l. 81 :

‘Their name, their years, spelt by th’ unletter’d muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply.’

l. 289. By a ‘speculative height’ Cowper seems to mean one from which the spectator commands an extensive view;—such a height as that described by Virgil, Aen. i. 180 :

‘Aeneas scopulum interea conscendit, et omnem
Prospectum late pelago petit.’

This meaning of the word is not precisely recognised in our dictionaries; though they commonly define it as ‘belonging to speculation,’ whether in its literal sense of ‘observation by the sight,’ or in its (now more common) metaphorical one of ‘examination by the mind.’ Othello (Act i. 3) speaks of the liability of his ‘speculative and active instruments’ to be ‘sealed with wanton dulness.’ The commentators take these words to mean his eyes and limbs, as the instruments of speculation and action. Hooke in his History of the Royal Society, iv. 30, applies the term ‘speculative glasses’ to telescopes.

l. 313. *Lord of the Wood.* Cp. Spenser’s Fairy Queene, I. i. 8 :

‘The builder oake, sole king of forrests all.’

l. 316. *dewy eve*;—from Par. Lost, i. 742 :

‘From morn

To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve.’

l. 320. *the woods in scarlet honours.* Cp. Hor. Epod. xi. 6 :

‘December . . . sylvis honorem decutit.’

And Virgil, Georg. ii. :

‘Frigidus et sylvis aquilo decussit honorem.’

l. 323. ‘At Olney the Ouse changes its character, and its course becomes so winding that the distance from that place to St. Nest’s, which is about twenty miles by land is about seventy by the stream.’—S. i. 140; where Southey proceeds to quote from Drayton: (Polyolbion Song 22).

‘Ouse having Oulney past, as she were waxed mad
From her first stayder course immediately doth gad,
And in meandered gyres doth whirl herself about,
That, this way, here and there, back, forward, in and out;

And like a wanton girl, oft doubling in her gait,
 In labyrinth like turns and twinings intricate,
 Through those rich fields doth run.'

l. 328. The *Naiades* were (in the Greek and Roman mythology) the nymphs presiding over fountains, wells, and rivulets; and were generally represented as lovely virgins leaning upon an urn, whence issued a stream of water. They had their name from Gr. *νάω*, to flow. Between the 'short and sharp declivity' leading down from the Alcove, and the 'reascent,' is a narrow channel cut for the purpose of draining the hollow, and which is generally dry in the summer. This the poet has personified as the Naiad or Nymph of the Rill. Cp. Table Talk, l. 693; and Keble's Christian Year, Monday in Easter Week :

'Some sister nymph, beside her urn
 Reclining night and day,
 'Mid reeds and mountain fern.'

l. 331. *the lord* ;—see note on l. 262. When Mr. Throckmorton succeeded to Weston Underwood in 1782, he allowed Cowper (though then personally unknown to him) to retain the key of the park; to which he afterwards added that of his private pleasure-grounds, and finally that of his valuable library.

ll. 332-4. Cp. Bk. iii. 719-24.

l. 342. Cp. Pope's Imit. of Cowley; 'The Garden,' l. 13 :
 'Here aged trees cathedral walks compose.'

Wordsworth; Labourers' Hymns :

'An altar is in each man's cot,
 A church in every grove that spreads
 Its living roof above our heads.'

{ 'We have scenes at Weston worthy of description. One of them has been much improved; I mean the lime walk. By the help of the axe and the woodbill, which have of late been constantly employed in cutting out all straggling branches that intercepted the arch, Mr. Throckmorton has now defined it with such exactness, that no cathedral in the world can show one of more magnificence and beauty.'—*To Lady Hesketh*, July 28, 1788. Warburton writes in his *Itinerarium Curiosum*, p. 68 (*apud* S. vi. 13) : 'The cloisters in this Cathedral [at Gloucester] are beautiful beyond anything I ever saw . . . The idea of it is taken from a walk of trees, whose branching heads are curiously imitated by the roof.'

l. 364. Cp. Shakespeare's 'primal eldest curse,' Hamlet iii. 3; and see Genesis iii. 19.

l. 365. Cp. Par. Lost, x. 1053 :

'On me the curse aslope
 Glanced on the ground: with labour I must earn
 My bread; what harm? idleness had been worse.'

ll. 367-71. Cp. Pascal, *Pensées*, xxv. 67: 'Notre nature est dans le mouvement, le repos entier est la mort.'

ll. 377-82. Yardley Oak. See the poem of that name, p. 204. Cp. Virgil, *Aeneid* iv. 443:

'Consternunt terram concusso stipite frondes;
Ipsa haeret scopulis, et quantum vertice ad auras
Aetherias, tantum radice in Tartara tendit.'

ll. 389-95. Cp. *Table Talk*, l. 744; *Task*, i. 755; iv. 207; v. 181, (where see note). Cp. too Pope's *Dunciad*, iv. 341:

'Thee too, my Paridel! she marked thee there,
Stretch'd on the rack of a too easy chair,
And heard thy everlasting yawn confess
The pains and penalties of idleness.'

Matthew Green, *The Spleen*, l. 600:

'And pleasures fled to, to redress
The sad fatigue of idleness.'

And Young's *Love of Fame*, *Satire*, v. (S. vi. 15):

'With anxious care they labour to be glad:
What bodily fatigue is half so bad?'

ll. 447-54. Cp. *Truth*, ll. 1-6; and Swift's description of a calenture, in his *South Sea Project*, (*Works*, ed. Scott, vol. xiv. p. 148):

'So by a calenture misled,
The mariner with rapture sees,
On the smooth ocean's azure bed,
Enamell'd fields and verdant trees.
With eager haste he longs to rove
In that fantastic scene, and thinks
It must be some enchanted grove;
And in he leaps, and down he sinks.'

l. 455. The *Spleen* used to be regarded as the reservoir of all the peccant humours of the body; and just as the liver was supposed to be the seat of erotic passions, and the heart is still spoken of as that of the affections, so 'the spleen' came to mean anger, ill-humour, discontent, or melancholy. 'Spleen-wort, a fern of the genus *Asplenium*, was so named because it was thought to be a sovereign remedy for affections of this nature. French writers are fond of attributing 'le spleen' to the English as a nation.

l. 465. *A pedlar's pack*. Cp. Persius, *Satire* iv. 24:

'Sed, praecedenti spectatur mantica tergo.'

l. 493. Cp. *Truth*, l. 176, and Spenser's *Epitaph on Sir P. Sidney*:

'And farewell merry hearts,
The gift of guiltless minds.'

l. 516. Cp. *Par. Lost*, ix. 247:

'But if much converse perhaps

Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield;
 For solitude sometimes is best society,
 And short retirement urges sweet return.'

l. 524. 'Around his waist are forests braced:' Byron.

l. 527. *goss* ;—the reading of ed. 1785 and 1786. Gorse (to which the word was altered in 1787) is still pronounced *goss* in Norfolk. Shakspeare has 'Tooth'd briars, sharp furzes, pricking *goss*, and thorns' (Tempest, iv. 1). *Deform* ;—(ed. 1785, 1786). Milton uses this adjective, Par. Lost, ii. 706. Altered to 'deform'd' in ed. 1787. (Cp. Yardley Oak, l. 5, p. 204).

l. 531. 'We have a scent in the fields about Olney which, even after attentive examination, I have never been able to account for. It proceeds, as far as I can find, neither from herb, nor tree, nor shrub: I suppose therefore that it is in the soil. It is exactly the scent of amber, when it has been rubbed hard, only more potent. I have never observed it except in hot weather, or in places where the sun shines powerfully, and from which the air is excluded. I had a strong poetical desire to describe it, when I was writing the Common scene in the Task, but feared lest the unfrequency of such a singular property in the earth, should have tempted the reader to ascribe it to a fanciful nose at least [if not] to have suspected it for a deliberate fiction.'—*To Lady Hesketh*, Dec. 6, 1785.

l. 556. After thanking Hill for 'two excellent prints,' Cowper writes (May 24, 1788): 'I cannot say that poor Kate resembles much the original, who was neither so young nor so handsome as the pencil has represented her.'

l. 569. *the pedigree they claim* ;—viz. from Egypt. The English name 'Gypsy,' and the Hungarian 'Pharaoh-nepet' (Pharaoh's people), applied to this race, testify to the popular (but erroneous) belief that they are of Egyptian origin. They were proscribed by Stat. 22 Hen. VIII. c. 10 (1530) as the 'outlandish people calling themselves Egyptians.' There is a legend that they were expelled for having refused hospitality to Joseph and Mary, with the infant Saviour, on the banks of the Nile; and it is stated that when they first appeared in Europe, *circ.* 1418, they were led by one who styled himself 'Duke Michael of Little Egypt.' But in Egypt itself, where they are numerous, they are regarded as strangers quite as much as in Europe; and their language affords ample proof that they are in reality of Indian origin. One of their names for themselves is *Sinte*, as coming from Sind, i. e. India; and the Turks call them 'Tchingani,' from a tribe still existing near the mouth of the Indus (*Tshin-calo*, black Indians). They much resemble the Nuls or Bazegurs, a wandering race in Hindustan, of very low repute amongst the other Hindoos; and it is conjectured that they belonged to the Soudras, a very low Indian caste, and were expelled by Timour Beg, c. 1390. In February 1856 Sir H. Rawlinson read before the Royal Geographical Society of London a paper on the migrations of the

Gypsies; tracing them distinctly from the Indus, through Persia, Syria, and Asia Minor, to the Bosphorus, whence they passed into Europe in the fourteenth century (see *Athenaeum*, 1856, p. 312). The earliest circumstantial account of the Gypsies in England is 'The Art of Juggling or *Legerdemaine*, by S. R.' [Samuel Rid], Lond. 1612, 4to. This author states that they arrived in England about the year 1512. (*Notes and Queries*, 1st ser. xi. 326).

I. 570. *Palmistry*, or fortune-telling from the inspection of the palms of the hand, is very ancient; and under its Greek name of *Chiromancy* ($\chi\epsilon\lambda\pi$, hand; and $\mu\alpha\nu\tau\epsilon\alpha$, prophecy) is cited by Aristotle as a positive science. Chiromancers divide the hand into several regions, each presided over by a planet. The thumb belongs to Venus, the index to Jupiter, the middle finger to Saturn, the annular to the Sun, and the auricular to Mercury; the centre of the hand to Mars, and the remainder to the Moon. The 'line of life,' which, when deeply defined, denotes a long life, and a short one if feeble or superficial, is between the thumb and index, traversing the centre of the palm. The triangle in the palm is consecrated to Mars; the longest of the three lines that form it is 'the hepatic line,' proceeding from the liver, and (if deeply cut) denotes a magnanimous character, but with a propensity to avarice and despondency. The 'mediana,' forming the base of the triangle, implies frankness, sprightliness, and love of pleasure. And so on, and so on. ('A World of Wonders,' 1853, p. 126).

II. 587-91. Cp. Par. Lost, iii. 606:

'What wonder then, if fields and regions here
Breathe forth elixir pure?'

I. 598. *obvious*;—easily to be found; properly, that which meets one on the way (from Lat. *obviam*). So in Par. Lost, viii. 504:

'Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retired.'

Cp. also, *ibid.* x. 106; xi. 374.

II. 600-7. Cp. Bk. iv. 659-62.

I. 621. The Society and Friendly Isles. The former, a group of islands lying near Otaheite, were discovered by Captain Cook on his first voyage, in 1768; and were so named by him in honour of the Royal Society of London, under whose auspices he had sailed into the Pacific, for the purpose of making observations of the transit of Venus across the sun's disk. The latter were a group of more than 150 isles, forming an archipelago in the South Pacific. They were discovered by Tasman in 1642, and were visited in 1767 by Capt. Wallis, who called them 'Keppel Islands;' but were first fully explored in 1773 by Captain Cook, who gave them their present name on account of the friendly disposition of the natives. The Sandwich Isles, so named from the Earl of Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty, and otherwise called the Hawaï Archipelago, were discovered in 1778 by Captain Cook, who was killed at Owhyhee (one of these islands) Feb. 14, 1779. Kaméhaméha III,

king of the Sandwich Islands, became a Christian, and visited London in 1824. His successor married Miss Emma Rooker in 1856, and she (as Queen) came to England in 1865 and was entertained at the British Court. Tahiti and the Society Isles put themselves under the protection of France in 1842, and are still a French possession.

1. 633. *gentle savage* ;—Omai, a native of Otaheite, whom Capt. Cook brought over as interpreter, on his return from his second voyage in 1775. He became one of the ‘lions’ of London; was received at Court; was painted by Reynolds; and was taken by Lord Mulgrave to dine at Streatham with Dr. Johnson, who ‘was struck with the elegance of his behaviour, and accounted for it thus: Sir, he had passed his time while in England only in the best company, so that all that he had acquired of our manners was genteel.’ (Boswell, ed. 1860, p. 497). Omai returned with Capt. Cook on his third voyage, loaded with presents; and during the short remainder of his days mourned over his exchange of the civilisation which he had enjoyed in England, for the barbarism of his island home.

1. 644. Cowper here refers to the public gardens, such as Vauxhall, Marylebone, and Ranelagh. Of these, Vauxhall was at this date at the summit of its fame, having been under the superintendence of Mr. John Tyers, the friend of Dr. Johnson, from 1732 to 1786. It was then the favourite resort of the aristocracy of London, including not only the Prince of Wales, but the leaders of fashion amongst the titled ladies of the land. Jane Vaux, widow of John Vaux, vintner, held the copyhold tenement in 1615; but the name is said to have been originally Fulke’s Hall, being the manor of Fulk de Breaté, a mercenary follower of King John. Pepys calls it Fox Hall (e. g. Diary, May 29, 1662, ed. 1854, i. 285). From the same passage we learn that a part of it was called Spring Garden, because it had succeeded as a place of public entertainment to the original ‘Spring Gardens,’ open in the reigns of James I. and Charles I. These were situate between Charing Cross and St. James’ Park, and were so called from a water-work which, when stepped upon, sprinkled the bystanders. During the Commonwealth the ‘Mulberry Gardens’ (on the site of Buckingham Palace) filled up the interregnum between Spring Gardens and Vauxhall, which was opened to the public soon after the Restoration.

1. 673. ‘The principal fruits of these circuits that have been made around the world, seem likely to be the amusement of those who staid at home. Discoveries have been made, but such discoveries as will hardly satisfy the expense of such undertakings. Nations that live upon bread-fruit, and have no mines to make them worthy of our acquaintance, will be but little visited for the future. So much the better for them! their poverty is indeed their mercy.’—*To Newton, Oct. 6, 1783.*

1. 681. Cp. Thomson’s *Seasons*, Autumn, l. 1352:

‘This is the life which those who fret in guilt,

And guilty cities never knew; the life
 Led by primeval ages, uncorrupt,
 When angels dwelt, and God Himself, with man.'

ll. 682-4. Cp. Juvenal's description of the foreign vices imported into Rome, Satire iii. 62, sqq.:

' Jampridem Syrus in Tiberim defluxit Orontes,' etc.

And Dr. Johnson's London, l. 94:

' London, the needy villain's general home,
 The common sewer of Paris and of Rome,
 With eager thirst, by folly or by fate,
 Sucks in the dregs of each corrupted state.'

ll. 687-728. Cp. Bk. iii. 833-42.

l. 700. Sir Joshua Reynolds (born 1723, died 1792, Pres. R.A. 1768-91) was compelled to give up painting four years after the publication of *The Task*, owing to a failure of eyesight, 1789.

l. 702. John Bacon, R.A. (born 1740, died 1799) was a personal friend of Mr. Newton and Cowper, whom he visited at Weston in 1788, and who esteemed him as 'a most excellent man and a most agreeable companion.' Bacon sent Cowper a print of his statue of Chatham in Westminster Abbey, (begun in 1778, and not finished till 1783); on which the Poet wrote, 'I think the figure of Lord Chatham singularly graceful, and his countenance full of the character that belongs to him. It speaks not only great ability and consummate skill, but a tender and heartfelt interest in the welfare of the charge committed to him . . But the figure of Commerce is indeed a perfect beauty:—it is a literal truth that I felt the tears flush into my eyes when I looked at her . . I have most of the monuments in the Abbey by heart; but I recollect none that ever gave me so much pleasure.'—*To Newton*, Oct. 22, 1783.

l. 703. Cp. Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi. 848:

' Excedunt alii spirantia mollius aera:
 Credo equidem, vivos ducent de marmore voltus.'

l. 725. Cp. Virgil, *Aeneid*, i. 461:

' . . . sunt hic etiam sua praemia laudi.'

l. 729. Cp. *Philippians*, iv. 8.

ll. 732-8. Cp. *Hamlet*, iii. 3:

' May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?
 In the corrupted currents of this world
 Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice:
 And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself
 Buys out the law.'

And Garth's Dispensary, Canto 2:

' Where little villains must submit to fate,
 That great ones may enjoy the world in state.'

l. 733. These 'rubrics of blood' (as Bacon calls them) continued to disgrace our statute books till 1810, when Sir Samuel Romilly carried the repeal of 8 Eliz. c. 4, which had made 'stealing from the person' a capital offence. In 1811, through Romilly's efforts, stealing in a dwelling-house to the amount of forty shillings became no longer capital. His Bill for repealing the statute of William III, which made it capital to steal in a shop to the amount of five shillings, was passed in the Commons in 1810, 1811, 1813, 1816, and 1818 (the year of Romilly's death), and was as often rejected by the Lords. Still, in 1821 Sir T. F. Buxton could say in the House of Commons, 'Kill your father or a rabbit in a warren, the penalty is the same! Destroy three kingdoms or a hop-bine, the penalty is the same! Meet a gypsy on the high road,—keep company with him, or kill him, the penalty is the same!' (Memoirs, 1848, p. 108.) There were then 230 offences punishable with death. Mr. Peel, on taking office in 1826, turned his attention to the subject, and introduced a Bill upon it in 1830: and finally the number of capital offences was reduced to eight or nine, and practically limited to high treason, murder, and attempts to murder. During the first twenty years of this century, the average number of persons executed in England and Wales was 84. In the eight years, 1849-57, the annual average was only nine.

l. 738. An allusion to Lord Clive's conquests in India. Cp. Bk. iv. 28-30, 681-3; Expostulation, ll. 364-75; and see Introduction, § 3, (vol. I, p. Ixiii).

l. 739. Cp. Hamlet, i. 2:

'It is not, nor it cannot come to, good.'

l. 740. Cp. Wordsworth's Excursion, Bk. ii. 258:

'An infidel contempt of holy writ
Stole by degrees upon his mind.'

l. 749. 'Nothing is more certain, than that when I wrote the line, 'God made the country, and man made the town,' I had not the least recollection of that very similar one which you quote from Hawkins Browne. It convinces me that critics (and none more than Warton, in his notes on Milton's Minor Poems) have often charged authors with borrowing what they drew from their own fund.'—*To Rose*, May 20, 1789. The line in question is in 'The Fire-side, a Pastoral Soliloquy,' v. 16, in which Browne says of country life, 'The town is man's world, but this is of God' (Poems, ed. 1768, p. 125). Mr. Bell adduces a curious parallel from Varro, *De Re Rustica*, iii. 1.—'Nec mirum quod divina natura dedit agros, ars humana aedificavit urbes.' Cowley has the line—

'God the first garden made, and the first city came.'

Bacon has also said, 'God Almighty first planted a garden' (Essay xlv).

l. 751. Cp. the beautiful lines quoted by Mr. F. Storr (English School Classics. Cowper's Task, 1874, p. 76):

'She took the cup of life to drink,
 Too bitter 'twas to drain;
 Meekly she put it from her lips,
 And went to sleep again.'

l. 755. The *sedan* (now almost entirely disused in England) is commonly said to have derived its name from the town of Sedan, in the north of France; either because this kind of hand-litter was invented there, or because originally covered with cloth manufactured there. But the Lat. *sedes* (a seat) is a simpler, and appears to be a sufficient origin of the name: even as Beckmann considers the most satisfactory derivation for the word 'coach' to be the Hungarian *gutsche*, a couch (Hist. of Invent. ed. Bohn, 1846, i. 785). Moreover, in one of our earliest notices of the sedan it is called a *sedge*. Sandys, in his Travels, 1615 (quoted by Fairholt in the Art Journal, May 1847, p. 159) says, 'The number of carouses is incredible that are kept in this city [Naples], as of the *sedges*, not unlike to horse-litters, but carried by men Wherein those that will not foot it in the heat are borne (if they please, unseen) about the city.' Haydn (Dict. of Dates, ed. 1871) says that sedans were first seen in England in 1581; but he cites no authority for this early date. Prince Charles, on returning from his wooing of the Infanta of Spain in 1623, brought from Madrid three sedans, two of which he gave to Buckingham. When the latter used them in the streets of London, the people 'with great clamour would rail on him as he rode, loathing that men should be brought to as servile a condition as horses;' and complaining of the king and nobles as thus 'degrading Englishmen into slaves and beasts of burden.' In 1634 Charles I. granted a patent for fourteen years to Sir Saunders Duncombe for letting sedans on hire, as 'a proper substitute for the coaches whereby the lives and limbs of His Majesty's subjects were greatly endangered.' In 1636 appeared a curious tract entitled 'Coach and Sedan pleasantly disputing for place and precedence, the Brewer's Cart being Moderator.' The sedan is said to have been introduced into France by M. de Montbrun in 1617, under the name of *chaise à porteurs*.

l. 771. Cp. note on Table Talk, l. 193, and see Introduction, § 3 (vol. i. pp. lx-lxii.) The expression 'graced with a sword' might indeed be referred to the fops of the period, who still wore the sword as an ornament at their sides. But the closing lines of the poem evidently allude to the dismemberment of the Empire by the peace with America, in 1782, the year before *The Sofa* was written. Cp. Bk. ii. 225-32; iv. 25-7.

Book II.—*The Time-Piece.*

'The title appears to me to have a degree of propriety beyond the most of them. The book . . . is intended to strike the hour that gives notice of approaching judgment, dealing pretty largely in the *signs of the times*.' —*To Newton*, Dec. 11, 1784.

l. 1. Jeremiah ix. 2.

l. 2. Cp. Thomson's Summer, l. 652 :

‘A boundless, deep immensity of shade.’

l. 8. Cp. Burns, Man was Made to Mourn :

‘Man’s inhumanity to man

Makes countless thousands mourn.’

l. 32. The foregoing lines were quoted with great effect in the House of Commons by Sheridan, in a speech on the abolition of slavery, March, 1807.

l. 42. It was on June 22, 1772, that the great Lord Mansfield gave his judicial decision, that ‘slaves cannot breathe in England.’ This was in the case of Somerset, a slave turned adrift in England on account of declining strength; and who, on restoration to health, resisted successfully, in the Court of King’s Bench, his former owner’s claim upon his services. In 1786, there were 130 English slave-ships, carrying 42,000 slaves. In May, 1787, the Society for the Suppression of the Slave-Trade was founded, with Mr. Granville Sharp as chairman, and Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce as conspicuous members. On May 9, 1788, Wilberforce made the first motion in the House on the subject. In 1806, Fox and Grenville acceded to the measure; and on March 25, 1807, an Act was passed for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, from and after Jan. 1, 1808. In 1811 it was made a felony to be engaged in this trade, and punishable with fourteen years’ transportation; and in 1824 it was declared to be piracy, if committed within the Admiralty jurisdiction, and punishable capitally (though this penalty was afterwards commuted for transportation for life). On Aug. 1, 1834, an Act was passed for the Abolition of Slavery itself in all British Colonies; a sum of twenty millions sterling being voted as compensation to the slave-owners. Finally, Aug. 1, 1838, was the day of the actual emancipation of the slaves. See note on the Negro’s Complaint; and cp. ‘Charity,’ ll. 137-95.

l. 53. ‘Alluding to the late calamities in Jamaica.’—C. The island was desolated by a succession of terrific hurricanes, at intervals, from Jan. 1780 to 1786.

l. 54. Cp. Julius Caesar, iii. 1 :

‘Cry havoc! and let slip the dogs of war.’

l. 57. ‘August 18, 1783.’—C. ‘A singular meteor was seen to traverse the sky from N.N.W. to S.S.E. It consisted of two brilliant balls of fire, of the apparent diameter of about two feet, side by side, followed by a train of eight others of smaller dimensions. The intervals between the balls (which were not of a pure white colour, but delicately tinted with prismatic hues), were filled up by a luminous substance of irregular shape, and the whole was terminated by a blaze of light.’ Mason’s *Notes*, quoted by Mr. Storr, p. 80.

l. 62. Cp. Job ix. 6, and Julius Caesar, i. 3:

‘Are not you moved, when all the sway of earth
Shakes, like a thing unfirm?’

l. 64. ‘Alluding to the fog that covered both Europe and Asia during the whole summer of 1783.’—C. ‘The fogs still continue, though till yesterday the earth was as dry as intense heat could make it. The sun continues to rise and set without his rays, and hardly shines at noon, even in a cloudless sky. That such an atmosphere should obtain for so long a time . . . is rather remarkable . . . As a poet I claim, if any wonderful event should follow, a right to apply all and every such post-prognostic to the purposes of the tragic muse.’—*To Newton*, June 13, 1783.

ll. 75-121. In the months of February and March, 1782, a series of earthquakes took place in Calabria and Sicily, in the course of which more than 20,000 persons in all are said to have perished. By the severest of the shocks, which was on Feb. 5, the city of Messina was utterly destroyed. The aged prince of Scylla betook himself for safety to the sea, together with many of his people; and the rest of them congregated on a high table-land. These latter were destroyed by huge masses of rock, which were hurled upon them from Mount Jaci; whilst the sea rose to an ‘abnormal’ height, and the ‘refluent wave’ drove all the boats high up the shore. This calamity alone cost the prince his life, as well as some 1500 or 2000 of his subjects; the people left alive being (it is said) fewer than the corpses that had to be buried.

l. 75. Cp. Par. Lost, xi. 653:

‘Where cattle pastured late, now scatter’d lies
With carcases and arms th’ ensanguined field,
Deserted.’

l. 78. Cp. Isaiah xxiv. 7, 8; and Thomson’s Seasons, Summer, l. 1108:

‘Mute the voice of joy,
And hush’d the clamour of the busy world;
Empty the streets, with uncouth verdure clad;
Into the worst of deserts sudden turn’d
The cheerful haunt of men.’

l. 85. Cp. Pope’s Messiah, ll. 23-30:

‘See! Nature hastens her earliest wreaths to bring,
With all the incense of the breathing spring . . .
Hark! a glad voice the lonely desert cheers:
“Prepare the way! a God, a God appears.”’

l. 91. Cp. Jeremiah iv. 24; and Psalm cxliv. 5.

l. 102. *vortiginous*: i. e. like a ‘vortex,’ or whirlpool. The present passage seems to be the only authority for this word, given in the dictionaries.

ll. 107-10. ‘Near Laurcana, in Calabria Ultra, a singular phenomenon

had been produced: the surface of two whole tenements, with large olive and mulberry trees therein, situated in a valley perfectly level, had been detached by the earthquake and transplanted, the trees still remaining in their places, to a distance of a mile from their former situation.' *Sir W. Hamilton to Sir J. Banks*, quoted by Mr. Storr, p. 81. He adds, from Burton's General History of Earthquakes, that in 1571, Marclay Hill, near Kinaston in Herefordshire, was 'conveyed bodily to a considerable distance, trees, flocks, and all.'

l. 112. The word *enormous* is here used, apparently, in its older and proper sense,—that of the modern 'abnormal.'

l. 114. Cp. St. Matthew viii. 27.

l. 121. *Ancient towers*. Mr. Storr again quotes from Sir W. Hamilton's letter: 'The superb palace called the *Palazzata*, which gave the port a more magnificent appearance than any port in Europe can boast of, had been entirely ruined.'

l. 150. Cp. St. Luke xiii. 2-5.

l. 174. Cp. Bk. i. 712.

l. 176. Cp. Bacon, Advancement of Learning, Bk. i: 'In the entrance of Philosophy, when the second causes, which are next unto the senses, do offer themselves to the mind of man, if it dwell and stay there, it may induce some oblivion of the highest cause; but when a man passeth on farther, and seeth the dependence of causes and the works of Providence; then, according to the allegory of the poets, he will easily believe that the highest link of Nature's chair must needs be tied to the foot of Jupiter's chair.' Bacon used nearly the same words again in Essay xvi.

181. Cp. Virgil, Aeneid, i. 81:

'Cavum conversa cuspide montem
Impulit in latus; ac venti velut agmine facto
Qua data porta ruunt, et terras turbine perflant.'

l. 203. Cp. Hor. Epist. lib. i. 1, 28:

'Non tamen idcirco contemnas lippus inungui.'

l. 206. Cp. Bk. iii. 837-40; v. 462-73.

l. 214. *Ausonia*,—a poetical name for Italy, as the land of the Ausones or descendants of Auson, who was a son of Odysseus by the nymph Calypso. Cp. Bk. iii. 582; v. 462-73; and Goldsmith's Traveller, ll. 111-22:

'Could Nature's beauty satisfy the breast,
The sons of Italy were surely blest,' &c.

ll. 216-8. Cp. Par. Regained, iv. 467:

'Thence to the famous orators repair,
Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence
Wielded at will that fierce democracy,
Shook the Arsenal, and *fulminated* over Greece.'

This is imitated from Aristoph. Acharn. l. 530:

Ἐντεῦθεν δρυγὴ Περικλέης οὐλύμπιος
ἥστραπτεν, ἐβρόντα, ξυνεκύκα τὴν Ἑλλάδα.

Longinus also says that the eloquence of Demosthenes was as thunder and lightning.

ll. 225-32. See note on Table Talk, l. 192.

l. 229. *myrtle wreath* :—in which the Romans appeared, ‘all essenced o'er with odours,’ at their banquets. Cp. Horat. Carm. lib. i. 38 :

‘Simplici myrto nihil adlabores
Sedulus cura; neque te ministrum
Dedecet myrtus, neque me sub arta
Vite bidentem.’

And the same, lib. ii. 11, 15 :

‘Canos odorati capillos,
Dum licet, Assyriaque nardo
Potamus uncti.’

l. 231. Cp. 1 Samuel v., and 1 Chron. xiii. 9.

l. 237. Cp. Wordsworth’s Sonnets to Liberty, period 1802 :

‘We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakspeare spake, the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held.’

l. 244. Wolfe was killed at the taking of Quebec, Sept. 13, 1759. See Introd. § 3 (vol. i. pp. xlxi-li). Chatham died May 14, 1778. See note on Table Talk, l. 342.

ll. 245-8. Cp. Bk. iv. 794-7. ‘His blood boiled at the degradation of his country. Whatever lowered her among the nations of the earth, he felt as a personal outrage to himself. And the feeling was natural. He had made her so great. He had been so proud of her, and she had been so proud of him.’—Macaulay on the Earl of Chatham : Essays, ed. 1854, vol. ii. p. 406.

l. 265. By ‘the jewel’ the poet means the North American Colonies, which France ‘picked out of England’s crown,’ by her alliance with them in 1778. See Introd. § 3 (vol. i. p. lix). To this interference of the French on ‘their behalf, Cowper constantly (however erroneously) ascribed the success of the States in the assertion of their Independence of Great Britain.

l. 270. Cp. Young’s Love of Fame, Sat. vii. (S. vi. 35) :

‘Who do for gold what Christians do for grace,
With open arms their enemies embrace.’

l. 281. Cp. Pope’s Imit. of Horace, first Ep. of second book, l. 143 :

‘Then peers grow proud in horsemanship t’ excel,
Newmarket’s glory rose, and Britain’s fell.’

l. 285. Cp. Dryden’s Spanish Fryer, ii. 2 :

‘There is a pleasure sure
In being mad, which none but madmen know.’

I. 286. Cp. Bk. iii. 559.

II. 290-3. Cp. Pope's Essay on Crit., ii. 297 :

'True wit is nature to advantage dress'd ;
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd ;
Something whose truth convinced at sight we find,
That gives us back the image of our mind.'

II. 294-7. Cp. Pope's Essay on Crit., ii. 243-52 :

'In wit, as nature, what affects our hearts
Is not the exactness of peculiar parts ;
'Tis not a lip, or eye, we beauty call,
But the joint force and full result of all.'

II. 298-304. 'Poetry, above all things, is useful to me in this respect. While I am held in pursuit of pretty images, or a pretty way of expressing them, I forget everything that is irksome, and, like a boy that plays truant, determine to avail myself of the present opportunity to be amused, and to put by the disagreeable recollection that I must, after all, go home and be whipt again.'—*To Newton*, Dec. 21, 1780.

II. 305-9. We all need to be reminded of Quintilian's maxim : 'Modeste tamen et circumspecto judicio de tantis viris pronuntiandum est, ne (quod plerisque accidit) damnent quod non intelligent.' Cp. Bacon, Adv. of Learning, Bk. ii. 19, § 1 (p. 182, C. P. S., 1873) : 'These critics have often presumed that that which they understand not is false set down.' Pliny remarks, 'De pictore, sculptore, fictore, nisi artifex judicare nemo potest.'

II. 310-13. Cp. Young's Second Epist. to Pope (S. vi. 36) :

'Serious should be an author's final views ;
Who write for pure amusement ne'er amuse.'

I. 315. *Yet what can satire?* that is, of what efficacy or power is satire ? The word 'can' (closely connected with the verb 'to ken,' and the noun 'cunning') is here used in something of its original signification ; namely, 'to have the knowledge or skill for' a thing, to 'know how to do it.' Cp. Hamlet, iv. 7 :

'I have seen myself and served against the French ;
And they *can* well on horseback ;'

i. e. they have good skill in horsemanship. King Lear, iv. 4 :

'What *can* man's wisdom
In the restoring his bereaved sense ?'

I. 318. The absurd practice of ladies wearing black patches—misdalled 'beauty spots'—on the face and forehead has, unhappily, been revived in the present day. It should be known that this, like most of the monstrous and unbecoming fashions by which women love to disfigure themselves, had its origin in the necessity for concealing a glaring personal defect on the cheek of a reigning belle at Court. In the time of Charles II, these patches

were fashioned into hearts, diamonds, crescents, and such like shapes. Butler in his Hudibras, Part ii. (1664) canto i. 611, speaks of the
 'black patches that she wears,
 Cut into suns, and moons, and stars.'

We are told that some went so far as to display on their faces a coach-and-four, or a ship in full sail, all cut out of what was named 'court plaster,' from its use by the ladies of the Court. In the reign of Queen Anne, as Addison tells us in the Spectator, No. 81 (June 2, 1711), a political use was made of these patches; which were worn on the right or left side of the face, to indicate Whig and Tory politics respectively. But the principal reason for their adoption by the women was from a delusion that their charms were thus heightened. Thus in the Gray's Inn Journal, No. 8, we find as part of the 'stock in trade of a coquette leaving off trade,'—'the secret of putting on patches in an artful manner, with instructions how to place them about the eye in such a manner as to give disdain, an amorous languish, or a cunning glance.'

l. 322. Cp. Job xii. 1-10.

l. 336. *support and ornament*;—Cp. Horat. Carm. Lib. i. 1, 2:
 'O et praesidium et dulce decus meum.'

Ibid. Lib. ii. xvii. 4:

'Grande decus columenque rerum.'

Virgil, Aeneid, v. 262:

'Donat habere viro decus et tutamen in armis.'

l. 338. 'Ambassadors for Christ,' 2 Cor. v. 20.

ll. 351-71. Dr. John Trusler, successively a doctor, clergyman, author, and bookseller, was a wholesale compiler and abridger of other men's writings. In particular he abridged, and printed in imitation of manuscript for use in the pulpit, the sermons of eminent divines. He died in 1820, at the age of 85. That the sermons in question long retained their popularity, appears from the following advertisement in *The Record* for Nov. 11, 1852:—'Important to clergymen.—A few sets of Dr. Trusler's facsimile manuscript sermons may still be procured at the low price of half a guinea for the set of 100 sermons.'

l. 353. *The News* was probably the name of some newspaper of the day. The advertisement of the homiletic quack is represented as finding its fitting place between those of 'two empirics,' or medical quacks.

l. 360. *i. e.* like music *in score*, in which the 'accent, tone, and emphasis' are indicated by letters and marks.

l. 367. Cp. 2 Samuel i. 20.

l. 369. *Droll*, *v. n.*;—to jest. It is also used as a *v. act.*, meaning to banter, or cajole.

l. 375. Cp. note on Bk. v. 650.

l. 394. Cp. Bk. vi. 620.

ll. 414-8. 'Affectation of every sort is odious, especially in a minister; and more especially an affectation that betrays him into expressions fit only for the mouths of the illiterate. Truth indeed needs no ornament, neither does a beautiful person; but to clothe it therefore in rags, when a decent habit was at hand, would be esteemed preposterous and absurd.'—*To Newton*, May 5, 1783.

l. 436. This 'nasal twang,' which has now almost died out of the English conventicle, was carried by the Pilgrim Fathers into the New World: where it has remained as a sort of national peculiarity of their descendants, the modern Americans. Most of the so-called 'Americanisms' in speech and phrase have a similar English origin.

l. 446. Cp. Churchill's *Rosciad*, l. 625:

'Sparks at his glass sat comfortably down,
To separate frown from smile, and smile from frown.'

l. 458. *house of clay*;—Cp. Job iv. 19.

l. 480. Cp. Young's *Love of Fame*, Sat. i. (S. vi. 40):

'The love of praise, howe'er conceal'd by art,
Reigns more or less and glows in every heart;
The proud to gain it toils on toils endure,
The modest shun it but to make it sure.'

l. 491. Cp. Shakspeare's 'lean unwash'd artificer,' *King John*, iv. 2.

l. 505. Cp. 1 Tim. vi. 20; Col. ii. 8.

l. 516. Cp. Bk. v. 876-8.

l. 530. Cp. *Isaiah* xxxv. 8.

l. 533. *shades of Academus*;—that is, the Academia, a public garden or park near Athens, so named from Academus, who presented it to his fellow-citizens as a place for gymnastics. In it were statues and fountains, groves of olives and planetrees. Here Plato delivered his lectures to his disciples; who were distinguished in consequence by the name of the 'Academic' sect of Philosophers. Hence our modern word 'academy,' meaning a school, or place of instruction.

l. 536. Cp. Young, Satire i. (*apud Bell*, ii. 228).

'When churchmen Scripture for the Classics quit,
Polite apostates from God's grace to wit.'

l. 540. The moral essays droned out from our pulpits in Cowper's days were drawn less from a Christian source, than from these Philosophers. 'In their preaching, nineteen clergymen out of twenty carefully abstained from dwelling upon Christian doctrines. Such topics exposed the preacher to the charge of fanaticism. Even the calm and sober Crabbe, who certainly never erred from excess of zeal, was stigmatized in those days by his brethren as a Methodist, because he introduced into his sermons the motives of future reward and punishment. An orthodox clergyman (they said) should be content to show his people the worldly advantage of good

conduct, and to leave heaven and hell to the ranters.'—Church Parties, 1854, p. 3.

l. 548. Cp. Romans xi. 13.

l. 565. Cp. Pope's 'goes down an unregarded thing,' Mor. Ess. Ep. ii. 252.

l. 579. *lustrum*;—a period of five years. The word properly meant a purificatory sacrifice (being commonly derived from Gr. *λούτρόν*, purification; though perhaps it is rather from the root *λύω*). This was offered by the Roman Censors at the conclusion of the census; and as this occurred every five years, the name was transferred to that period of time.

ll. 580-95. The *Monitor* of 'George's days' has since been called a 'back-board,' and is still used occasionally in girls' schools.

l. 596. L. Licinius Lucullus, a noble Roman (born B.C. 110; Consul, B.C. 74; died B.C. 57), after having gained a triumph for his successful conduct of the Mithridatic war, became notorious for his Asiatic luxury and profusion. Horace (who is probably Cowper's authority) gives it as an *on dit* that Lucullus, when asked if he could furnish 100 *chlamydes* for use on the stage, replied that he had 5000 of those 'habits' at home (Lib. i. Epist. vi. 40-5): Plutarch says 200 (*Vit. Luculli*). For a further account of Lucullus, see J. Reid's *Academica of Cicero*, 1874, p. lviii.

l. 600. With reference to this line, Cowper wrote to Unwin, Aug. 27, 1785, 'Upon solemn occasions, as in prayer or preaching, for instance, I would be strictly correct; and upon stately ones—for instance, were I writing an epic poem,—I would be so likewise; but not upon familiar occasions. God *who* heareth prayer, is right. Hector *who* saw Patroclus, is right. And the man *that* dresses me every day, is in my mind right also;—because the contrary would give an air of stiffness and pedantry to an expression, that in respect of the matter of it cannot be too negligently made up.' Notwithstanding this protest, our author felt himself compelled to yield to what was becoming the usage of his day, and revert to the *who* and *which* of Elizabethan days. Mr. Bruce's laborious and valuable collation shows us that 'who' was substituted for 'that,' in all places where the latter had been used as a relative with a personal antecedent, in the editions of 1787. As early as 1711, Steele had sent to the Spectator (No. 78) his 'humble Petition of *Who* and *Which* ;' wherein these complain, 'We are descended of ancient families, and kept up our dignity and honour many years, till the jack-sprat *That* supplanted us.' The fact is, they had first driven out 'that,' which was originally the only relative, and which returned to favour in the latter half of the seventeenth century—probably as conducing more to smoothness of diction. See Mr. Abbott's Shakspearian Grammar, § 258, ed. 1871, p. 175; and cp. note on 'The Rose,' vol. i.

l. 638. Cp. Pope's Moral Essays, Epist. ii. 235-40:

'At last, to follies youth could scarce defend
It grows their age's prudence to pretend;

Ashamed to own they gave delight before,
 Reduced to feign it when they give no more :
 As hags hold Sabbaths, less for joy than spite,
 So these their merry, miserable night.'

l. 646. Cp. Thomson's Seasons, Autumn, l. 1238 :

'What though the dome be wanting, whose proud gate
 Each morning vomits out the sneaking crowd
 Of flatterers false, and in their turn abused ?'

l. 648. When the streets of London were dimly lit up with oil lamps, the wealthier sort of persons used to be attended by servants carrying *flambeaux*, or by hired 'linkboys' with links (or torches of pitch and tow), to light them on their way at night. In I Henry IV, iii. 3, Falstaff says, in allusion to Bardolph's fiery nose, 'Thou hast saved me a thousand marks in links and torches, walking with thee in the night, betwixt tavern and tavern.' In 'London' (1738) Dr. Johnson writes, l. 234 :

'Afar they mark the flambeaux' bright approach
 And shun the shining train, and golden coach.'

At the entrance door of many houses in what were formerly the fashionable parts of London, may still be seen, attached to the iron railings, the post-horn-shaped extinguishers, in which these flambeaux were quenched after use. Gas-lighting in London was first introduced in Golden Lane, 1807; was used in Pall Mall in 1809; and became general through the streets from 1814 to 1820.

l. 652. *hackney'd* ;—carried home in a hackney (or hired) coach, or sedan-chair. It has been asserted that the 'hackney coach' was so named from the parish of Hackney, near London, as being the place between which and the City the first public coaches for hire plied (in 1625). This was not the fact, and the derivation was invented on the analogy of that of the French *fiacre*; which had its name from its first starting from the Hotel St. Fiacre in Paris. The word *hackney* had been current in this country both as *subst.* and *adj.* three centuries earlier. It is the Fr. *hagueneé*, which meant the ambling or pacing horse (*cheval de louage*, i.e. horse for hire) used by the ordinary or peaceful traveller, as distinguished from the *destrier* of the knight, and the *coursier* of his man-at-arms. So the sportsman's 'hack' (an abbreviation of *hackney*) is the roadster which he rides to cover, in order to spare his hunter. Perhaps the earliest use of the word in English literature is in the Romaunt of the Rose (so long—but now no longer—ascribed to Chaucer), where we find a 'hackney' opposed to a 'hors of prise.' The word is common in our early inventories : e.g. in the 'Status Domus' of Jarrow Monastery, anno 1313, 'Item in stabulo sunt ij palefridi, et j hakenay' (Surtees Soc. vol. xxix. p. 11). Ménage defines *hagueneé* as *equus gradarius*; and Brachet derives it from Sp. *hacanéa*. May it be that the word was after all onomatopoeic, intended to express the sound of

a horse's neigh (cp. Lat. *cachinnus*)? If it be objected that all horses neigh, and that a particular kind of horse cannot be distinguished by a mark common to all; it may be replied, that this appears to have been the generic name for the riding-horse, (and in early times horses were not used for draught or agricultural purposes)—from which the superior kinds were distinguished by special appellations. From this *subst.* flowed naturally the several meanings of 'hackney' when used as *adj.*: viz. 'hired,' 'common,' or 'worn out, used up.' The horse let on hire was that which had an easy, ambling pace—'the right butterwoman's pace to market'—as being less fatiguing to the traveller, especially if not an habitual horseman. So Florio tells us in his *First Fruites* (1578) that the hire is 'a shilling a day for a horse that can amble, and is caparisoned' (*Notes and Queries*, 3rd ser., iii. 135). Hence the 'hackney,' or ambling nag, came to mean the 'horse for hire'; and the 'hackney man,' who flourished amongst us at least as early as 1396 (see *Notes and Queries*, 3rd ser. ii. 355), was he who let out horses on hire, preceding by more than two centuries the 'hackney-coachman,' who first appeared in London in 1623 or 1625. It therefore seems more probable that the 'hackney coach' was a 'coach for hire,' than one 'drawn by hackneys.'

l. 684. *catchpole*;—old name for a sergeant, or bailiff. Bacon speaks of 'Under-sheriffs and catch-poles' (*Essay 53*): and in *Essay 56*, of 'Catching and poling clerks and ministers.'

l. 708. Cp. Par. *Lost*, viii. 288:

'Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love.'

l. 741. *in truck*;—that is, by way of barter or exchange. See note in Vol. i. on *Expostulation*, l. 374.

l. 774. *oscitancy*;—(Lat. *oscitare*, to open the mouth widely, gape), yawning, sleepiness.

ll. 780-96. The Rev. John Cowper, A.M., Fellow of Bene't Coll., and Vicar of Foxton, Cambridgeshire, was born Nov. 13, 1737; and died at Cambridge, March 20, 1770. The Poet left a sketch of his character, with an account of his last illness; which was published from his MSS. by Mr. Newton in 1802, under the title of *Adelphi*. (See S. i. 152-64.) In this, his brother writes of him, 'He was a man of a most candid and ingenuous spirit; his temper remarkably sweet, and in his behaviour to me he had always manifested an uncommon affection. He was critically skilled in the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages, was beginning to make himself master of the Syriac, and he perfectly understood the French and Italian.' (S. i. 152). Cowper wrote to Hill, Nov. 14, 1772, 'I have been a considerable loser in point of income by my brother's death':—although a sum of £350 came to him out of John's personal estate. (*To Hill*, Nov. 5, 1772.)

l. 785. 'Bene't College, Cambridge.'—C. 'When I first knew Cam-

bridge, I knew that Bene't had a character: it was my father's principal inducement when he chose that college for my brother.'—*To Unwin*, Nov. 20, 1784. This College, now known as Corpus Christi, has at the present day 'a character' which would have formed a still stronger recommendation of it to the Evangelical poet.

l. 786. 'Praised, wept, and honour'd by the Muse he loved.' (Pope's Epit. on Craggs, l. 6.)

ll. 792-4. Cp. Wordsworth's Ode to Duty, l. 9:

'There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth;
Glad hearts! without reproach or blot;
Who do thy work, and know it not.'

l. 803. *the quiver*, &c. Cp. Psalm cxxvii. 6, 7.

l. 825. Exodus viii. 2-14. 'I do not think that drinkers, gamesters, fornicators, lewd talkers, and profane jesters—men, in short, of no principles either religious or moral, (and such, we know, are the majority of those sent out by our Universities)—can be dishonoured by a comparison with anything on this side Erebus. I do not therefore repent of my frogs.'—*To Unwin*, Nov. 20, 1784. Let us thank God that things are better now!

Book III.—The Garden.

ll. 1-8. Cp. Par. Lost, ix. 445-53:

'As one who, long in populous city pent,' &c.

l. 26. *the satiric thong*. Cp. Horat. Sat., lib. I. iii. 119:

'Ne scutica dignum horribili sectere flagello.'

ll. 28-30. Cp. Horat. Carm., lib. II. xi. 13:

'Cur non sub alta vel platano vel hac
Pinu jacentes sic temere,' etc.

l. 32. *Nitrous air* was one of the names by which Dr. Priestley (born 1733, died 1804) designated what is now called Oxygen gas,—then newly discovered by him. Cp. Thomson's Seasons, Winter, l. 693:

'And through the blue serene,
For sight too fine, th' ethereal nitre flies,
Killing infectious damps, and the spent air
Storing afresh with elemental life.'

ll. 41-57. Cp. ll. 290-304, and 675-94.

l. 46. *drops of bitter*. So Lucretius, De Rer. Nat. iv. 1126:

'Medio de fonte leporum
Surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat.'

I. 52. *zoneless* ;—ungirt, and hence ‘ loose, careless, wanton ;’ equivalent to Lat. *discincta*—the *zona* being the girdle worn round the waist by all respectable young women.

I. 73. *unsmirched* ;—unsullied. Cp. Shakspeare’s ‘ chaste unsmirched brow,’ Hamlet iv. 5. To ‘ smirch ’ is from Germ. *schmieren*, to smear, grease, daub.’

II. 100-4. Cp. Rochefoucauld, Reflex. Mor., No. 223 : ‘ L’hypocrisie est un homage que le vice rend à la vertu.’

II. 108-12. Cp. Hamlet, iii. 2 :

‘ Why, let the stricken deer go weep.’

The Earl of Surrey, ‘ The Faithful Lover,’ I. 21 :

‘ Then as a stricken deer withdraws himself alone,

So do I seek some secret place where I may make my moan.

Sackville, Complaint of Buckingham (*apud* Bell, ii. 240) :

‘ Like to the deer that, stricken with the dart,

Withdraws himself into some secret place,

And feeling green the wound about his heart,

Startles with pangs till he fall on the grass.’

I. 113. Cp. Genesis xlix. 23.

I. 115. Cp. Virgil, Aen. xii. 403 :

‘ Nequidquam trepidat, nequidquam *spicula dextra*

Sollicitat, prensatque tenaci forcipe ferrum.’

It is a bold Latinism to use the word ‘ solicit ’ in this sense—namely, that of gently stirring the darts, and working them from side to side, so as to loosen their hold upon the flesh, and ‘ coax ’ them out.

II. 139-50. Cp. Queredo, Vision vii. (*apud* S. vi. 55) ;—‘ Then came Domitian, dragging in Suetonius. There is no greater pest, said he, than that generation of scribbling rogues, the historians :—when they have vented the humour and caprice of their own brains, *that* forsooth must be called—The Life of such an Emperor ! ’ And Rochefoucauld, Maxim 7 : ‘ Great actions, the lustre of which dazzles us, are by politicians represented as the effects of deep designs ; whereas they are commonly the effects of caprice and passion.’

II. 155-66. Cp. Bk. vi. 198-210.

II. 167-9. Cp. Horat. Epist., lib. I. i. 107 :

‘ Liber, honoratus, pulcher, rex denique regum ;

Praecipue sanus, nisi quum pituita molesta est.’

II. 174-6. Cp. The Rape of Lucrece, st. 31 :

‘ What win I if I gain the thing I seek ?

A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy ;

Who buys a minute’s mirth to wail a week ?

Or sells Eternity to get a toy ?’

Young’s Love of Fame (Bell, ii. 242) :

‘ Methinks we need not our short being shun

And, thought to fly, contend to be undone
 We need not buy our ruin with one crime,
 And give Eternity to murder Time.'

l. 189. Cp. Matt. Green, *The Spleen*, l. 15 :
 'Nor vainly buys what Gildon sells—
 Poetic buckets for dry wells.'

ll. 196-205. Cp. Terent. *Heautontim.* Act i. 1 ;
 'Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.'

Richard the Second, iii. 2 :

'I live with bread like you, feel want, taste grief,
 Need friends.'

Merchant of Venice, iii. 1 : 'Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?'

l. 215. The *parallax* is the difference between the apparent position of a heavenly body, and its true relation to the centre of the earth. Mrs. Somerville defines it as 'the angle under which the radius of the earth would be seen, if viewed from the centre of that body.' Cowper's meaning is, 'I have not the wit to determine (with your philosophers) the apparent variation of that star from its true place in the abyss.'

l. 251. *Castalia* was a fountain on Mount Parnassus, sacred to Apollo and the Muses; and whoso drank of its waters was inspired to know the things to come. Cp. Young's *Night Thoughts*, v. 106 :

'Unseen thou lead'st me to delicious draughts
 Of inspiration from a purer stream,
 And fuller of the god, than that which burst
 From famed Castalia.'

ll. 252-60. Sir Isaac Newton, born 1642, died 1727; John Milton, born 1608, died 1674; Sir Matthew Hale (Chief Baron of Exchequer, 1660; Chief Justice of King's Bench, 1671-5), born 1609, died 1676.

l. 257. *Themis*, daughter of Ouranos and Gaia (Heaven and Earth), and wife of Zeus, was Goddess of Justice; the first to whom mortals raised temples; represented as holding a sword in one hand, and a pair of scales in the other.

l. 261. *Isaiah* xl. 6, 7.

l. 263. *Proverbs* xxiii. 15.

l. 267. Cp. *Ecclesiastes* i. 3, 14.

l. 268. The *Amaranth* is an imaginary flower of the poets, that never fades, (Gr. ἄ, not; μαραίνω, to wither). See *Par. Lost*, iii. 552-60. Cp. Shirley's *Contention of Ajax and Ulysses*, sc. 3 :

‘Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust.’

Cp. too Cicero, *De Senect.* cap. 19: ‘Sed mihi ne diuturnum quidem quidquam videtur, in quo est aliquid extremum: quum enim id advenit, tunc illud quod praeterit effluxit; tantum remanet quod virtute et recte factis consecutus sis.’

l. 270. St. John xviii. 38. Cowper’s assertion that Christ ‘deigned no reply’ to Pilate, is at least as questionable as that of Bacon (*Essay i.*): ‘*What is Truth?* said jesting Pilate; and would not stay for an answer.’

ll. 290–304. Cp. Thomson, *Autumn*, l. 1234:

‘Oh! knew he but his happiness, of men
The happiest he, who, far from public rage,
Deep in the vale, with a choice few retired,
Drinks the pure pleasures of the rural life.’

And his *Castle of Indolence*, canto i., st. 16:

‘The best of men have ever loved repose.’

ll. 334–51. The Poet’s favourite hare ‘Puss,’ given to him in 1774. See his ‘Account of the Treatment of his Hares,’ inserted in the Gentleman’s Magazine for June, 1784 (S. iv. 422). Puss died March 9, 1786, ‘aged eleven years eleven months,—of mere old age.’

l. 351. Cowper had ‘acquired considerable applause, as a child, in the recital of Gay’s popular Fable—“The Hare and many Friends.”’ (Hayley, ed. 1812, iv. 179.)

l. 361. *Laborious ease*;—Cp. Bk. i. 755, and Horace’s ‘strenua inertia,’ Lib. i. Epist. xi. 28.

l. 363. Cp. Lucret. *De Rer. Nat.* Lib. iii. 984:

‘Vitaque mancipio nulli datur omnibus usu.’

l. 364. *use*;—that is, interest; in which sense both this, and the cognate forms ‘usury’ and ‘usance’ were formerly employed. Cp. Owen Felltham’s *Resolves* (1628) No. 81; ‘Their nature leans to mutual requitals; and to pay with numerous *use* the favours of a free affection.’ So Jeremy Taylor in his *Holy Living*: ‘If it be good, thou hast received it from God, and then thou art more obliged to pay duty and tribute, *use* and principal to Him.’ And South, in his *Sermons*: ‘Most of the learned, heathen and Christian, assert the taking of *use* to be unlawful.’

l. 400. *lubbard*;—another form of *lubber*, here used adjectively for ‘sluggish.’ Milton has ‘the lubbar fiend,’ *L’Allegro*, l. 110.

l. 429. ‘Miraturque novos fructus et non sua poma—Virgil.’—C. (*Georg.* ii. 82 :—for ‘novos fructus’ read *novas frondes*).

l. 452. The *Culex* (gnat) attributed to Virgil (born at Mantua): and the *Batrachomyomachia* (battle of the frogs and mice) fathered on Homer.

l. 455. John Phillips of Ch. Ch. Oxford (born 1676, died 1708), published in 1703, ‘The Splendid Shilling,’ a parody on the style of Milton.

The earliest piece of Cowper's that has come down to us is a poem written in his seventeenth year, in imitation of Phillips: viz. 'Verses written at Bath, on finding the heel of a shoe, in 1748.'

l. 459. Observe very rare use of the verb 'presume' as a verb transitive having a direct object. Cp. Cowper's similar use of the verb 'to intend,' in l. 387 of this book.

l. 490. *voluble* ;—(from Lat. *volvere*, to roll), here used in its proper sense of 'rolling.' Milton has 'volúbil earth' (with accent on the second syllable), *Par. Lost*, iv. 594, with the same meaning.

l. 495. The atmosphere of Boeotia was proverbially thick and foggy, owing to the great number of lakes and rivers in that district. And the dwellers in it were regarded as exceptionally lumpish, and lacking in spirit and intelligence.

l. 506. Cp. *Hamlet*, v. 2 :

'Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
When our deep plots do fail.'

Garth's Dispensary, Canto iv :

'Into the right we err, and must confess,
To oversights we often owe success.'

l. 559. Cp. Bk. ii. 286.

l. 576. The *Amomum* here intended is perhaps the *Myrtus pimenta*, or *Jamaica pepper*.

l. 579. *Ficoides* ;—the *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*, or *Ice-plant*.

l. 585. *Caffreia* was the older name for 'Caffraria.' The latter reading first appeared in the edition of 1798.

l. 597. Q. Roscius Gallus, the famous Roman actor, under whom Cicero studied the art of delivery (born B.C. 129; died about B.C. 62). David Garrick (born 1716, died 1779), has often been called 'The British Roscius.' He 'trod the stage' from 1741 to 1776.

l. 664. Cp. Bk. vi. 928-31; and *Wordsworth's Excursion*, Bk. i. 95 :

'Strongest minds
Are often those of whom the noisy world
Hears least.'

l. 665. *the neighbour shrub* ;—a late instance of the adjectival use of the word *neighbour*; for which 'neighbouring' is now substituted. Cp. 'Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities,' *Jer. xl ix. 18*; l. 40: 'neighbour states,' *Timon of Ath. iv. 3*; *Bacon, Essay xxix.*

l. 687. Cp. *Goldsmith's Deserted Village*, l. 101 :

'Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 'tis hard to conquer, learns to fly.'

And *Horat. Carm. Lib. IV. iv. 51* :

'quos opimus
Fallere et effugere est triumphus.'

I. 711. Cp. Young's Love of Fame, Sat. i. (S. vi. 71):

‘On every thorn delightful wisdom grows,
In every rill a sweet instruction flows;
But some, untaught, ne'er hear the whispering rill,
In spite of sacred leisure, blockheads still.’

I. 714. King Ahasuerus: see Esther i. 10.

II. 719-24. Cp. Bk. i. 332-4.

I. 729. Cp. L'Allegro, l. 117:

‘Tower'd cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men,’

I. 738. *Stygian . . . darkness*;—that is, the darkness of Hell; the *Styx* being the river which was fabled to flow nine times round the infernal regions. Milton calls it, in Par. Lost, ii. 577,

‘Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate;’

thus deriving the word from Greek *στυγέω*, ‘to hate.’ The gods were said to swear by the Styx

‘That dreadful oath, which binds the Thunderer.’

For this oath was always held to be inviolable; as a draught of the Stygian waters was supposed to be fatal even to gods.

In 1853 an Act was passed to abate the smoke nuisance proceeding from chimney shafts and steamers above London Bridge. In 1856 its provisions were extended to steamers below the Bridge, and to potteries and glass factories, by a second Act which came into operation Jan. 1, 1858. By these Acts, the ‘metropolitan volcanoes’ are compelled to consume their own smoke.

I. 766. Lancelot Brown, a famous landscape-gardener (born 1715, died 1773). He was called ‘Capability Brown,’ from his favourite phrase about ‘great capability of improvement.’ He laid out the grounds and park at Weston for Sir Robert Throckmorton, the grandfather of Cowper’s ‘Benevolus.’

II. 781-9. Cp. Young's Love of Fame, Sat. i. (S. vi. 73):

‘The pile is finish'd; every toil is past,
And full perfection is arrived at last;
When lo! my Lord to some small corner runs,
And leaves state rooms to strangers and to duns.
The man who builds, and wants wherewith to pay,
Provides a home from which to run away.’

II. 795-800. We in this age can scarcely believe the extent to which bribery was carried on in Cowper's days. No wonder that it was never found expedient to state the manner in which the ‘Secret Service Money’ was expended. In 1763, Henry Fox, ‘the least scrupulous of all Sir Robert Walpole's pupils,’ was Paymaster of the Forces under the Earl of Bute; and ‘on accepting the lead of the House of Commons, he had undertaken to purchase a majority in favour of the Peace. A kind of mart for Members of

Parliament was opened by him at his own office. It is alleged that the lowest bribe for a vote upon the Peace was a banknote of £200, and that Mr. Martin, the Secretary of the Treasury, afterwards acknowledged £25,000 to have been thus expended in a single morning' (Stanhope, History of England, ed. 1858, vol. v. p. 10: cp. Macaulay, Essay on the Earl of Chatham, vol. ii. p. 380, ed. 1854). In Bk. iv. 603-12, the Poet charges even the magistrates of his day,—and those for the most part clergymen,—with accepting bribes. Cp. Young's *Love of Fame*, Sat. i. (S. vi. 73):

‘When men grow great from their treasure spent,
And fly from bailiffs into Parliament.’

I. 802. The *crape* was for the masks used by the highwaymen; of whom there were still many in Cowper's day.

II. 805-7. Cp. Horat. Carm. Lib. III. xxix. 55:

‘Virtute me involvo, probamque
Pauperiem sine dote quaero.’

I. 822. In *The Spectator*, No. 193 (Oct. 11, 1711), is an amusing paper on ‘the levees of great men.’ The word was then by no means appropriated to royal receptions.

II. 843-8. Cp. *Genesis* xviii. 23-33.

I. 845. Cp. *St. Matthew* v. 13.

Book IV.—The Winter Evening.

I. 1. This wooden bridge is of a length ‘wearisome,’—because it ‘bestrides’ the whole valley between Olney and Emberton; and ‘needful,’—on account of the ‘wintry flood,’ which would otherwise render that valley often impassable to the foot-passenger.

I. 12. ‘And whistled as he went for want of thought.’

Dryden's *Cymon and Iphig.*, l. 85.

I. 40. Bishop Berkeley, in the 217th paragraph of his *Siris* (1747), says of ‘the luminous spirit lodged and detained in the native balsam of pines and firs,’—in other words, his favourite *Tar-water*,—that it is ‘of a nature so mild and benign, and proportional to the human constitution, as to warm without heating, to cheer but not inebriate.’ (Notes and Queries, 2nd Ser. i. 490). In this line Cowper is found setting at nought that rule of modern English Grammar, which requires that whenever ‘not’ precedes the verb which it qualifies, the auxiliary ‘do’ should be used before it. Thus, in prose at least, we should write, ‘The cups that do not inebriate.’ In transgressing this rule our Poet is in good, if somewhat old-fashioned company. Shakspeare gives us abundant instances of this classical use of the negative before the verb—as it is invariably placed in the Greek and Latin languages. Take such examples as these: ‘I not doubt,’ *Tempest*, ii. 1; ‘whereof the ewe not bites,’ *ibid.* v. 1; ‘it not belongs to you,’ *2 Henry IV.* iv. 1; ‘it

not appears to me,' in the same Act and Scene; 'whose all not equals Richard's moiety,' Richard the Third, i. 2; 'I beseech you that you not delay,' Coriol. i. 6; 'that which not enriches him,' Othello, iii. 3. So Ben Jonson, in his verses *To the Memory of Shakspeare*, l. 52:

'Neat Terence, witty Plautus, now not please.'

The original Anglo-Saxon negative, *ne* or *na*, was invariably placed before the verb, and nowhere else: as it is in French, and as it was in Latin (as *ne-que*, *ne-scio*, *ne-queo*), and in Greek (as *νηλεψ* which is from *νη-* and *ἐλεος*, *νηστεύω*, which is *νη-* and *ἐσθιω*). But formerly in English, as still in French, the modal element was added after the verb; as *ne-pas* ('not a step'); *ne-point* ('not a jot'); *ne-jamais* ('not ever'). In English the modal has been combined with the pure negative, and (in the case of *not*) the compound word thus formed either takes the place of the modal after the verb, or if placed before the verb expects the auxiliary 'do.' The old forms *ne whit*, *ne ever*, *ne one*, have become 'nought' and then 'not,' 'never,' and 'none.' In O. E. the union of the negative with the verb by crasis was common; as, *nam*, *nart*, *nis* ('am not, art not, is not'); *nast*, *nath* ('hast not, hath not'). 'Will he, nill he' (Lat. *nolens, volens*) is 'whether he will or *will not*.'

l. 62. Cp. Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, i. 54:

'When lo ! push'd up to power, and crown'd their cares,
In comes another set and kicketh them down stairs.'

l. 73. *cataracts of declamation*. So Juvenal (Sat. x. 128) describes Demosthenes as one,

'Quem mirabantur Athenae
Torrentem, et pleni moderantem frena theatri.'

ll. 74-5. Cp. Pope's *Moral Essays*, Epist. ii. 112:

'Woman and fool are two hard things to hit;
For true no-meaning puzzles more than wit.'

l. 85. *Ethereal journeys*. The subject of Aerostation was exciting universal attention about the date of Cowper's writing. The first ascent was made by Joseph and Stephen Montgolfier, at Annonay, June 5, 1783. Their balloon was filled with hot air from burning straw. The first who ascended in a balloon inflated with hydrogen, were MM. Robert and Charles, on August 27 in the same year. The earliest aeronaut in England was Lunardi, who ascended from Moorfields, September 15, 1784; and the aerial passage across the Channel was performed from Dover, by Blanchard and Jefferies, Jan. 7, 1785.

l. 86. 'Doctor' Katterfelto was a notorious quack, who used to go about attended by a black Morocco cat, and headed his advertisements with the words, 'Wonders! Wonders! Wonders!'

ll. 88-92. Cp. ll. 308-10; and *Truth*, l. 253 (where see note).

l. 103. 'Lupus homini homo, non homo, quum qualis sit non novit.' Plaut. *Asinaria*, Act ii. sc. 4. Cowper of course only quotes his old school

book: but query,—Is this the idea embodied in the old legends respecting Lycanthropy; the *were-wolf* of the Germanic races, and the *loup-garou* of the South of France? Cp. Howell's *Epistolae Ho-Elianae*, Bk. i. § vi. epist. 58 (dated 1644): 'I must resent the desperate case of this Nation, who seem to have fallen quite from the very faculty of reason, and to be possessed with a pure Lycanthropy, with a wolvish kind of disposition to tear one another in this manner; insomuch that if ever the old saying was verified, *Homo homini lupus*, it is certainly now. I will conclude with this distich:

"They err, who write no Wolves in England range;
Here Men are all turn'd Wolves, O monstrous change!"'

Lycanthropy was the transformation of a man into a wolf; whether actually by means of magic, or in imagination, through a kind of frenzy or monomania. The word is from the Greek *λύκος* a wolf, and *ἄνθρωπος*, a man. So *were-wolf* is from Ang.-Sax. *were*, a man; and of *garou* Brachet tells us, in his Etymol. French Dict. (ed. Kitchin, 1873), that it is the Old French *garoul*, from 'gerulphus' (as *Raoul* from 'Radulphus'), which is found in Med. Lat.; and quotes Gervasius Tilberiensis thus:—'Vidimus frequenter in Anglia per lunationes homines in lupos mutari; quod hominum genus Gerulphos Galli nominant, Angli vero *were-vulf* dicunt.' *Gerulphus* is of Germ. origin, and answers to Swed. *varulf* (from *var*, a man; and *ulf*, a wolf). Pliny discredited the story: 'Homines in lupos verti, rursumque restitui sibi, falsum.' But he adds, 'Ista vulgo infixa est fama in tantum, ut in maledictis *versipelles* habeat;' and cites the Greek Euanthes as an authority (Nat. Hist., lib. viii. cap. 22). Ovid gives a minute account of the conversion of Lycaon, King of Arcadia, into a wolf, as a punishment from Jupiter for the savage ferocity of his disposition (Metam. i. 209–39). In Virgil's Eclog. viii. 95–8, Alphesibaeus refers such transformations to the magical effects of 'herba' and 'Ponto lecta venena':—

'His ego saepe lupum fieri et se condere sylvis
Moerim . . . vidi.'

It was from a similar belief, that in a conference of theologians convened by the Emperor Sigismund, transformation into were-wolves was pronounced a crime, and any assertion to the contrary was accounted as heresy.

I. 104. Cp. Milton's 'brazen throat of war,' Par. Lost, xi. 713: Virgil's 'ferrea vox,' Georg. ii. 44; and Homer's *ὅπα χάλκεον Αλακίδαο*, Iliad, xviii. 222; and Soph. *χαλκοβόον Αρη*, Oed. Col. 1046.

II. 113–9. 'My imagination is so captivated upon these occasions, that I seem to partake with the navigators in all the dangers they encountered. I lose my anchor; my mainsail is rent into shreds; I kill a shark, and by signs converse with a Patagonian; and all this without moving from the fireside.'—To Newton, Oct. 6, 1783. Cp. Soame Jenyns (*apud* S. vi. 78):

'Sometimes in distant climes I stray,
By guides experienced taught the way;

The wonders of each region view,
From frozen Lapland to Peru;
Bound o'er rough seas and mountains bare,
Yet ne'er forsake my elbow chair.'

l. 120. Cp. Thomson's Seasons, Winter, l. 1 :

'See ! Winter comes, to rule the varied year.'

And the same, l. 1024 :

'Tis done ! stern Winter spreads his latest glooms,
And reigns tremendous o'er the conquer'd year.'

Again, l. 43 :

'And fierce Aquarius stains *th' inverted year* ;'

Which is Horace's (Satir. Lib. i. 1, 36) :

'Simul inversum contristat Aquarius annum.'

l. 130. *the yet undawning east*. Our dictionaries give us no other authority for the use of the word 'undawning,' besides the present passage.

ll. 139-43. 'I see the winter approaching without much concern, though a passionate lover of fine weather and the pleasant scenes of summer ; but the long evenings have their comforts too, and there is hardly to be found upon the earth, I suppose, so snug a creature as an Englishman by his fireside in the winter.'—*To Hill*, Oct. 20, 1783.

l. 163. *charming strife*. Cp. the 'concordia discors' of Horace (Epist. i. 12, 19), Ovid (Met. i. 433), and Lucan (Phars. i. 98) ; and All's Well that Ends Well, i. 1 :

'His jarring concord, and his discord dulcet.'

John Ford, The Lover's Melancholy, i. 1 :

'Concord in discord, lines of differing method,
Meeting in one full centre of delight.'

l. 168. 'Plain living and high thinking are no more.'

Wordsworth.

l. 175. Cp. Thomson's Seasons, Winter, l. 571 :

'Thus in some deep retirement would I pass
The winter glooms, with friends of pliant soul,
Or blithe or solemn, as the theme inspired.'

l. 190. *Sabine bard* ;—Horace (born at Venusia in Apulia, A.U.C. 688 ; called 'Sabina' from his favourite Sabine farm), Sat. lib. ii. 6. l. 65 :

'O noctes caenaeque Deum.'

l. 221. *Billiard-mast* ;—old form of the modern 'mace,' which latter was first substituted for it in ed. 1806.

ll. 243-8. Cp. Milton's Addresses to Evening, Il Pensero, ll. 31-8 ; Par. Lost, iv. 598-609.

l. 244. Cp. Milton's Song on May Morning, l. 9 :

'Thus we salute thee with our early song,
And welcome thee, and wish thee long.'

l. 285. Cp. Bk. vi. 106. 'I can assert with the strictest truth that I not only do not think with connexion, but that I frequently do not think at all. I am much mistaken if I do not often catch myself napping in this way; for when I ask myself what was the last idea (as the ushers at Westminster ask an idle boy what was the last word), I am not able to answer, but, like the boy in question, am obliged to stare and say nothing.'—*To Newton, Oct. 9, 1784.*

l. 329. *Assimilate all objects*;—that is, render them all alike. This absolute use of the verb 'to assimilate' is uncommon, and is apparently not recognised in our dictionaries. Its proper use is relative;—the object, *to* which something else is assimilated being expressed. We must therefore suppose an ellipse; as if the Poet had written, 'Assimilate all objects to one another.'

l. 335. *thistly sorrow*. Cp. Catull., 62, 72: '*Spinosas Erycina serens in pectore curas.*'

l. 402. *Skillet*;—A small kettle or boiler. Old Fr. *escuellette*, now *écuelle*; dim. of *écuelle*, a porringer. Cp. Othello, i. 3:

'Let housewives make a *skillet* of my helm.'

Dr. Johnson, in The Rambler, says of Lady Bartle: 'It is indeed the great business of her life to watch the *skillet* on the fire, to see it simmer with the due degree of heat, and to snatch it off at the moment of projection.'

l. 411. Cp. Hamlet, iii. 1:

'The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes.'

l. 428. Mr. Robert Smith, created Lord Carrington in 1796 (born 1752; died 1838). 'Under the strictest injunctions of secrecy, he sent forty pounds, twenty at a time,' for the relief of the poor at Olney.—*To Unwin, Jan. 19, 1783.* 'I have paid one compliment . . . which is so justly due, that I did not know how to withhold it, especially having so fair an occasion, . . . to Mr. Smith. It is, however, so managed, that nobody but himself can make the application.'—*To Unwin, Oct. 10, 1784.*

l. 437. *To plash* (Fr. *plisser*, from late Lat. *plictiare*, a derivative of *plicare*, to weave), is to intertwine or weave together the branches of a tree; the same as '*pleach*', as in the '*pleached bower*', of Much Ado About Nothing, iii. 1.

l. 447. The name *Chanticleer*, used by all our poets from Chaucer downwards, as a proper name for the cock, is derived from the popular mediaeval romance of '*Reynard the Fox*'.

l. 449. Cp. Chaucer, Nonnes Preestes Tale (Cant. Tales, l. 15, 188)

'He clukketh whan he hath a corn yfound,
And to him rennen than *his wives alle*.
Thus real, *as a prince* is in his halle,
Leve I this Chaunteclere in his pasture.'

l. 460. *Ebriety* (from Lat. *ebrius*, drunken) is now supplanted by the compound word 'inebriety ;' where the prefix *in* is not privative, but intensive.

l. 475. *Takes a Lethean leave of all his toil* ;—that is, forgets it all. 'Lethe, the river of oblivion' (Gr. $\lambda\eta\theta\eta$, forgetfulness), was that 'slow and silent stream' in Hades,

‘whereof who drinks,
Forthwith his former state and being forgets,
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.’

Par. Lost, ii. 582-6.

All human souls, on entering Hades, had to drink of the waters of Lethe, that they might lose the remembrance of their earthly existence. Cp. Virgil, Aen. vi. 713 :

Animae, quibus altera fato
Corpora debentur, Lethaei ad fluminis undam
Securos latices et longa oblivia potent.’

ll. 482-4. Cp. Par. Lost, ii. 907 :

‘Chaos umpire sits,
And by decision more embroils the fray.’

l. 507. Midas, king of Phrygia, in return for his hospitality to Silenus, was endowed with the power of turning whatever he touched into gold. Finding that his very food became gold in his mouth, he prayed for the recall of the gift. To secure his release, he was bidden to bathe in the river Pactolus ; the sands of which became thenceforward golden.

ll. 515-6. Maro (i.e. Virgil) in his Eclogues : Sir Philip Sidney in his Arcadia, a Pastoral Romance, published in 1590.

l. 517. *Nymphs were Dianas then* ;—Diana was the Virgin Goddess, the exemplar and the patroness of chastity. Cp. Much Ado about Nothing, iv. 1 :

‘You were to me as Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown.’

l. 521. *as they sing*. See Virgil, Georg. ii 473 :

‘Sacra deum, sanctique patres : extrema per illos
Justitia excedens terris vestigia fecit.’

l. 528. *gay delirium*. Cp. Cicero, De Nat. Deor., lib. i. 42 : ‘Exposui fere non philosophorum judicia, sed *delirantium* somnia.’

l. 533. *tramontane* ;—foreign, strange ; properly, belonging to countries 'beyond the mountains' (Lat. *trans montes*). The North Wind is called in Italy 'La Tramontana,' because it blows across the Alps.

l. 541. Cp. Addison's paper on the ladies' head-dresses in his day, Spectator, No. 98 : 'I remember several ladies that were once near seven feet high, that at present want some inches of five. . . I very much admire that those female architects who raise such wonderful structures out of

ribands, lace, and wire, have not been recorded for their respective inventions.'

I. 552. See note on Bk. i. 260.

II. 566-71. This reference to house-breakers may have been suggested to the Poet by the recent experience of Lady Austen. In August 1782, soon after her return to Clifton Reynes, her brother-in-law, the Rev. Mr. Jones, Curate of that parish, went to London. Thereupon for several successive nights, the house was visited by villains, who were at length detected in removing a pane of glass from the kitchen window, to effect an entrance. The ladies of the house fled in alarm to Mrs. Unwin's protection; and 'men furnished with firearms were put into the house' till Mr. Jones's return. Lady Austen, unable to 'repose in a place where she had been so much terrified,' remained as Mrs. Unwin's guest, until the Vicarage-House was prepared for her to lodge in.—See letter to Unwin, S. ii. 443.

I. 579. Cp. Bk. v. 592-5, and Par. Lost, xii. 105 :

'Thus will this latter, as the former world,
Still tend from bad to worse.'

Horat. Carm. lib. iii. vi. 46 :

'Aetas parentum, pejor avis, tulit
Nos nequiores, mox datus
Progeniem vitiosiorem.'

Eurip. Hippolytus, l. 937 :

τί τέρμα τόλμης καὶ θράσους γενήσεται ;
εἰ γάρ κατ' ἀνδρὸς βίοτον ἔξογκώσεται
δὸς δ' ὑστερος τοῦ πρόσθεν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν
πανούργος ἔσται, θεοῖσι προσβαλεῖν χθονὶ¹
ἄλλην δεῖσει γαῖαν.

I. 596. Cp. Romans xiii. 4.

II. 600-3. See note on Table Talk, l. 312.

II. 605-11. See note on Bk. iii. 795.

I. 607. Cp. Julius Caesar, iv. 3 :

'Let me tell you, Cassius, you yourself
Are much condemn'd to have an itching palm ;
To sell and mart your offices for gold
To undeservers.'

I. 627. *Is balloted.* This balloting, which gave rise to the phrase '*drawn for the Militia*,' was discontinued in 1830.

I. 642. The use of hair powder, which had been compulsory in the British army, was discontinued by a general order, dated Nov. 12, 1799; 'the late general bad harvest having rendered this measure indispensable.' See Notes and Queries, 4th Ser. ix. 402.

II. 671-83. Cp. Southey's Colloquies on Society, vol. ii. p. 193 :—'There is no corporate conscience. Men who act in bodies, it matters not whether

large or small, mobs, senates, or cabinets, will without hesitation take their share in measures which, if proposed to any one of them as an individual, would make him reply with the Syrian,—Am I a dog that I should do this thing?

ll. 681-3. The reference is to the East India Company. See note on Bk. i. 738.

l. 707. *Tityrus*;—The name of the rustic swain in the first Eclogue of Virgil. Spenser calls Chaucer,

‘The god of shepherds, Tityrus.’

(Shepherd’s Calendar, June, st. 11.)

l. 723. Abraham Cowley (born 1618, died 1667) was, like Cowper, educated at Westminster School; and like Cowper, was celebrated in his day not only as a Poet, but as a letter-writer. After many vicissitudes occasioned by his adherence to the Royalist cause, he obtained, on the death of Cromwell, a lease of a farm at Chertsey: and

‘There the last numbers flow’d from Cowley’s tongue.’

(Pope’s Windsor Forest, l. 270.)

l. 757. *Well*;—The Poet seems to mean that the citizen’s garden, as being a confined space hemmed in by high brick walls, is more like a ‘well’ than a garden.

l. 765. *The Frenchman’s darling*;—‘Mignonette.’—C!

BOOK V.—*The Winter Morning Walk.*

l. 7. Shakspeare more properly applies the epithet ‘uneffectual’ to the light of the glow-worm;—Hamlet, i. 5:

‘And ’gins to pale his uneffectual fire.’

l. 22. *Bents*;—(Germ. *binse*, rush) culms of pasture grasses; which being neither mown nor eaten, stand up as dry stalks. Cp. ‘A Tale,’ l. 40 (p. 214.)

l. 42. Cp. Bk. vi. 842; and Par. Lost, iii. 46.

l. 101. This is a description of Lavendon Mill, which is now displaced by a cotton mill.

l. 122. Cp. Wordsworth’s Excursion, Bk. iii. 130:

‘The sport of Nature, aided by blind chance,
Rudely to mock the works of toiling man.’

And the same, Bk. vi. 323:

‘Twas Nature’s will; who sometimes undertakes
For the reproof of human vanity,
Art to outstrip in her peculiar walk.’

And again in his 2nd Sonnet on Staffa:

‘The pillar’d vestibule,
Expanding yet precise, the arching roof,

Might seem design'd to humble man, when proud
Of his best workmanship by plan and tool.'

ll. 127-68. This famous ice-palace was erected in 1740, by order of the Empress Anna, on the banks of the Neva. It was constructed of blocks of ice hewn out of that river, and had all its furniture and ornaments made also of ice. In this palace, which lasted from January till March, 1740, Prince Golitzin had to pass his bridal night on his second marriage, which was displeasing to the Empress.

l. 137. Aristaeus, son of Phoebus by the water-nymph Cyrene, had been deprived of his bees, because it was through him that Eurydice (the wife of Orpheus) came to her death. The 'plaintive tale' to his mother is given by Virgil, *Georg.* iv. 317.

l. 140. *Arrowy sleet* :—Cp. *Par. Regained*, iii. 324 :
' Sharp sleet of arrowy showers against the face.'
And Gray, 'The Fatal Sisters,' st. 1 :

' Iron sleet of arrowy shower
Hurtles in the darken'd air.'

But in these and many such like passages which might be adduced, the arrows are likened to sleet; not (as here) the sleet to arrows.

l. 145. *1 Kings vi. 7.* Cp. Heber's *Palestine* :
' No workman's steel, no ponderous axes rang,
Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprang.'

l. 147. *cément*. Notice the accent on the first syllable, a mode of pronunciation now almost obsolete. Cp. G. Herbert, *The Altar* :

' A broken Altar, Lord, Thy servant rears,
Made of a heart, and *cemented* with tears.'

And Pope's *Dunciad*, iv. 267 :

' With the same *cément*, ever sure to bind.'

In *The Task*, ii. 437 (p. 37), the line began thus, in the editions of 1785 and 1786,—'At *cónventicle* heard; ' and was altered in ed. 1787 to the present reading, viz.—' Heard at *conventicle*.' Cp. *Butler's Hudibras*, Pt. I. ii. 438 :

' Like ram or bull at *conventicle*,'

And *Garth's Dispensary*, Canto iv :

' A *conventicle* flush'd his greener years.'

In *The Retired Cat*, l. 27 (p. 209), we find *útensil* for the modern 'uténsil.' Cp. *Prior's Vanity of the World*, Bk. iii. 178 :

' And after *útensils* their place supply.'

Cowper has also *desserts* for 'desserts' (*Pity for Poor Africans*, l. 8, p. 191), *siníster* for 'sinister' (*Friendship*, l. 53); and *consummate* (as an *adj.*) for 'consúmmate' (*Expostulation*, l. 315). The *émpiric* of *The Task*, ii. 352; and the *phlégmatic* of *Expost.* l. 296, are now commonly pronounced 'em-píric' and 'phlegmátic.'

l. 178. Dinocrates, a sculptor of Macedonia, offered to cut Mount Athos into the figure of Alexander the Great, holding in his left hand the walls for a great city, and in his right a basin to receive all the waters flowing from the mountain. The king, however, declined the honour.

l. 181. 'What a lie,' writes Abp. Trench, 'lurks at the root of our present use of the word "indolence." This is from "*in*" and "*doleo*," not to grieve; and "indolence" is thus a state in which we have no grief or pain; so that the word . . . seems to affirm that indulgence in sloth and ease is that which would constitute for us the absence of all pain. Cowper spoke only truth when, perhaps proposing expressly to witness against the falsehood of this word, he spoke of

"Lives spent in *indolence* and therefore *sad*," not "therefore *glad*," as the word would promise.' On the Study of Words, ed. 1852, p. 202. See note on Bk. i. 755. In Scotland, a favourite phrase with indolent persons is, 'I canna' be *fashed*,' 'ne'er fash yourself,' &c. This word 'fash' is the Fr. *fâcher* (formerly *fascher*, from Prov. *fastigar*), to vex, grieve, afflict. The Lat. word 'indolentia' itself was coined by Cicero, (as would appear from his *De Finibus*, ii. 4) as an equivalent for the *ἀνάθετα* of the Greek philosophy; that is, a state of freedom from passion and pain. The English word was originally used in the same scholastic sense. Thus Cowper's ancestor, Dr. John Donne, writes in his Sermons (1640, p. 156) that Christ 'came nearer to an excess of passion than to an *indolency*, to a senselessness, to a privation of natural affections.' Addison writes in The Spectator, No. 381 (1712), 'A good mind may bear up under them,' (viz. 'pain and sickness, shame and reproach, poverty and old age'), 'with fortitude, with *indolence*, and with cheerfulness of heart.' And Dr. Berkeley writes in the Guardian, No. 62 (May 22, 1713), 'When men come to riper years, the innocent diversions which exalted the spirits, and produce health of body, *indolence* of mind, and refreshing slumbers, are too often exchanged for criminal delights, which fill the soul with anguish, and the body with disease.'

l. 183. The Mausoleum, one of the 'seven wonders of the world,' was the monument of Mausolus, king of Caria (B.C. 377-53), erected by his widow, Artemisia, at Halicarnassus, B.C. 353.

l. 186. Cp. Hor. Epist. I. ii. 14:

'Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.'

l. 193. Genesis xi. 3-9.

l. 217. Not *Tubal* (Gen. x. 2); but *Tubal Cain* (Gen. iv. 22): called 'Vulcan,' because the latter was the blacksmith-god, having his workshop in the crater of Mount Aetna.

l. 240. Cp. Milton, Sonnet xiii:

'Peace hath her victories,
No less renown'd than War.'

l. 270. Cp. Table Talk, l. 50.

l. 273. *gears* ;—traces, harness for draught. The word survives in the phrase ‘out of gear,’ properly said of machinery that is loosened from its ‘traces.’

l. 316. *doit* ;—the Dutch *doit* or *doitken* (Germ. *Deut*), a very small coin (= $\frac{1}{160}$ of a guilder). Cp. Tempest, ii. 2: ‘They will not give a *doit* to relieve a lame beggar; they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian.’ The phrase is equivalent to the French ‘*pas un sou* ;’ or the American one, ‘his last *cent*.’

l. 321. Judges ix. 3-15.

l. 341. ‘My sentiments on the subject of Charles’ decollation are peculiar, at least I believe they are so. I think it was a good deed, but ill done; that his life was forfeit, but taken away upon wrong motives.’—*To Unwin, Oct. 20, 1784.*

l. 378. ‘The author hopes that he shall not be accused for unnecessary warmth upon so interesting a subject. He is aware that it is become almost fashionable to stigmatize such sentiments as no better than empty declamation: but it is an ill symptom, and peculiar to modern times.’—C. Fox quoted this passage on the destruction of the Bastille, in the House of Commons. (Hayley, ed. 1812, iv. 193.)

l. 383. The Bastille was erected by Charles V. in 1369, as a royal chateau, for the defence of Paris against the English; and was completed in 1383. It was called ‘*The Building*,’ (the name being from the Old French *bastir*—now *bâtir*, to build), *par excellence*; just as we speak of ‘*The Tower*,’ or ‘*The Mansion House*;’ or as we read in St. Luke xiii. 4, of ‘the tower (i. e. the well-known tower, $\delta\pi\mu\gamma\sigma$) in Siloam.’ King Louis XI. was the first to use the Bastille as a state prison. Henri IV. assaulted it in vain in the siege of Paris, during the war (1587-94). The mysterious ‘Man with the Iron Mask’ died a prisoner there, Nov. 19, 1703. The Bastille was destroyed by the Parisians in the French Revolution, July 14, 1789; when its Governor and other officers had their hands and heads cut off, and the latter were paraded on pikes through the streets.

l. 400. Daniel iv. 10-18.

l. 420. The walls of the Beauchamp Tower in the Tower of London, for instance, are covered with the inscriptions of the illustrious prisoners who have been therein confined.

l. 422. Cp. Byron’s Prisoner of Chillon, st. 14:

‘With spiders I had friendship made,
And watch’d them in their sullen trade.’

l. 444. The *Manichaeans*, a sect of heretics dating from the middle of the third century, were the followers of Manes, a Persian, who had been ordained as a priest, but was expelled from the Church and put to death as a false teacher, A.D. 277. St. Augustine in early youth embraced this heresy, of which he was afterwards a principal opponent. Manes taught

that there were two Gods, contrary and co-eternal, the one good and the other evil (the Ormuz and Ahriman of the heresiarch's old Persian theology); and that the world was created by the Evil Deity.

l. 462. Cp. Bk. ii. 214, and note thereon.

l. 486. John Hampden was an 'almost solitary instance of a great man who neither sought nor shunned greatness, who found glory only because glory lay in the plain path of duty.' (Macaulay's Essays, ed. 1854, i. 191.) Born in 1594, he first distinguished himself by his opposition to the exaction of ship-money. Having taken up arms against the royal cause, he was mortally wounded in an engagement with Prince Rupert at Chalgrove Field, near Oxford, in 1643; and died with the prayer on his lips, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! O Lord, save my country!' Algernon Sidney, son of Robert second Earl of Leicester, was born in 1621; espoused the side of the Parliament, and was nominated as one of the King's Judges, but refused to take part in the execution of Charles, and retired into private life on Cromwell's assuming the title of Protector. Though promised security in 1667, he was tried before Judge Jefferies on a charge of being concerned in the Rye House Plot, and illegally executed in 1683. Cp. Wordsworth's Ecclesiastical Sketches, Sonnet ix. Pt. 3:

'Ungrateful country, if thou e'er forget
The sons who for thy civil rights have bled;
How, like a Roman, Sidney bow'd his head.'

l. 502. *the charities* ;—Cp. Par. Lost, iv. 756:

'Relations dear, and all the charities
Of father, son, and brother.'

Cicero, De Offic. i. 17: 'Sed quum omnia ratione animoque lustraris, omnium societatum nulla est gravior, nulla carior, quam ea quae cum republica est unicuique nostrum. Cari sunt parentes, cari liberi, propinqui, familiares: sed omnes omnium caritates patria una complexa est.'

l. 555. Cp. St. John i. 3.

l. 562. Cp. 2 Peter iii. 10-13.

l. 567. Cp. Psalm xiv. 1.

l. 585. *propense* ;—prone, disposed by nature. Milton has 'hearts propense to waver,' Samson Agon. l. 455.

l. 594. Cp. Bk. iv. 579; and Par. Lost, iv. 76:

'And in the lowest deep a lower deep,
Still threatening to devour me, opens wide,
To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven.'

l. 625. *A presage ominous* ;—as leading to 'pride, which goeth before destruction,' Proverbs xvi. 18.

l. 635. Cp. Genesis iii. 1.

l. 650. Cp. Bk. ii. 432-7; and Churchill's Dedication to his Sermons, l. 61:

'No; 'tis thy inward man, thy proper worth,
 Thy life and doctrine uniformly join'd,
 And flowing from that wholesome source, thy mind;
 Thy virtue, not thy rank, demands my lays,
 'Tis not the Bishop, but the Saint, I praise.'

G. Herbert, Country Parson, ch. 3: 'Neither will they believe him in the pulpit, whom they cannot trust in his conversation.' Some one has well said, 'The parson's life is his best sermon.' Yet Pope has pushed this sentiment to a sophism;—Essay on Man, Epist. iii. 305:

'For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight:
 His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right.'

Cicero argues well against the converse of this: Tusc. Disput., lib. ii. capp. 4, 5: 'Quod est enim majus argumentum, nihil philosophiam prodesse, quam quosdam perfectos philosophos turpiter vivere? Nullum vero id quidem argumentum est; nam ut agri non omnes frugiferi sunt qui coluntur, sic animi non omnes culti fructum ferunt.' And then he goes on with an exact parallel to our Lord's Parable of the Sower.

l. 671. Cp. Psalm lxviii. 5.

l. 673. Cp. Par. Lost, iv. 846:

'Abash'd the Devil stood,
 And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
 Virtue in her shape how lovely!'

And Cicero, De Officiis, lib. i. cap. 5: 'Formam quidem ipsam et tanquam faciem honesti vides: quae si oculis cerneretur, mirabiles amores (ut ait Plato) excitaret sapientiae.' The passage of Plato referred to is in the Phaedrus, ch. 65: *ἡ φρόνησις οὐχ ὁράται δεινοὺς γὰρ ἀν παρεῖχεν ἔρωτας εἰ τοιοῦτο ἐντῆς ἐναργὲς εἰδῶλον παρείχετο εἰς ὄψιν ἔεν.*

l. 675. *The First and only Fair.* Cp. Pope's Essay on Man, Epist. ii. 23:

'Go, soar with Plato to the empyreal sphere,
 To the first Good, first Perfect, and first Fair.'

l. 681. Cp. 1 Corinthians xiii. 1.

l. 685. Cp. 1 Kings xix. 12.

l. 702. Cp. Isaiah xi. 8; and 2 Corinthians xii. 9.

l. 706. Horat. Carm. lib. IV. ix. 10:

'Spirat adhuc amor
 Vivuntque commissi calores
 Aeoliae fidibus puellae.'

l. 718. Cp. Par. Lost, ix. 28:

'Wars, hitherto the only argument
 Heroic deem'd, chief mast'ry to dissect
 With long and tedious havoc, fabled Knights
 In battles feign'd; the better fortitude

Of patience and heroic martyrdom
Unsung.'

ll. 726-32. Cp. Par. Lost, xi. 698:

'Thus fame shall be achieved, renown on Earth;
And what most merits fame in silence hid.'

l. 732. 'See Hume'—C. [Chap. xxvii.; 'The glory of martyrdom stimulates all the more furious zealots,' &c.]

l. 733. Cp. St. John viii. 32.

l. 737. Judges xvi. 7-10.

ll. 738-43. Cp. Young, 1st Essay to Pope (S. vi. 120):

'These, Nature's commoners, who want a home,
Claim the wide world for their majestic dome.'

l. 744. *propriety*;—a sense of absolute personal possession or property (from Latin *proprium*). Cp. Par. Lost, iv. 750:

'Hail wedded love, mysterious law, true source
Of human offspring, sole *propriety*
In Paradise of all things common else.'

Owen Felltham, writing on the same subject (1628), says: 'The best chastity of all I hold to be Matrimoniall chastity: when Paires keepe themselves in a moderate intermutualnesse, each constant to the other. And 'tis fit even in Nature and Policy, that this *propriety* should be inviolable.'—

Resolves, i. 85.

l. 674. Cp. Acts xxii. 39; and Proverbs viii. 23-7.

l. 779. Cp. Job xxii. 21.

l. 785. Cp. Ovid. Metamorph. i. 84:

'Pronaque quum spectent animalia caetera terram
Os homini sublime dedit, caelumque tueri
Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.'

l. 793. Cp. Pope's Dunciad, iv. 455:

'See nature in some partial narrow shape,
And let the Author of the whole escape.'

l. 802. *Result*;—here used in its primary and proper sense, 'to leap or fly back.' So in Pope's Homer's Odyss. xi. 736:

'Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone;
The huge round stone *resulting* with a bound
Thunders impetuous down.'

l. 809. Cp. Thomson, Hymn xxviii. :

'But wand'ring oft with brute unconscious gaze,
Man marks not Thee.'

l. 821. Job xxxviii. 7.

l. 828. Cp. Akenside's Pleas. of Imag., l. 204:

'And fields of radiance, whose unfading light
Has travell'd the profound six thousand years,
Nor yet arrives in sight of mortal things.'

l. 846. Cp. Psalm cxix. 105.

ll. 870-3. Cp. Pope's Essay on Man, i. 289:

‘All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee;
All Chance, direction which thou canst not see.’

Book VI.—The Winter Walk at Noon.

l. 1. Cp. Matt. Green, *The Spleen*, ii. 147-53:

‘Many have held the soul to be
Nearly allied to harmony;
And own, neglecting sorrow's wound,
The consanguinity of sound?’

ll. 30-2. Cp. *Par. Lost*, x. 1094:

‘In whose look serene,
When angry most he seem'd and most severe
What else but favour, grace, and mercy shone?’

ll. 50-3. Cp. *Retirement*, l. 406; where see note.

ll. 54-6. ‘Long before *The Task* was published, I made an experiment one day, being in a frolicsome mood, upon a friend. We were walking in the garden, and conversing on a subject similar to these lines’ [viz. the three above indicated], ‘I repeated them, and said to him with an air of nonchalance, “Do you recollect those lines? I have seen them somewhere; where are they?” He put on a considering face, and after some deliberation replied, “Oh! I will tell you where they must be; in the *Night Thoughts*.” I was glad my trial turned out so well, and did not undeceive him. At the same time I do assure you, on the faith of an honest man, that I never in my life designed an imitation of *Young*, or of any other writer, for mimicry is my abhorrence,—at least in Poetry.’—*To Lady Hesketh*, May 25, 1786.

ll. 57-82. Here follows a description of the walk leading up from the Rustic Bridge to the Alcove. Cp. note on Bk. ii. 278.

l. 66. *embattled tower*;—of Emberton Church.

ll. 76-84. Cp. W. Browne, *Britannia's Pastorals*, Bk. II. i. 789-96:

‘Clamour grew dumb, unheard was shepherd's song,
And silence girt the wood
Only the curled streams soft chidings kept;
And little gales in fearful whisp'ring stirred
As loath to waken any singing bird.’

ll. 88-97. Cp. Selden's *Table Talk*: ‘No man is the wiser for his learning; it may administer matter to work in, or objects to work upon; but wit and wisdom are born with man.’

So Francis Quarles, in his *Emblems*:

'The curious hand of Knowledge doth but pick
 Bare simples; Wisdom pounds them for the sick.
 Knowledge, when Wisdom is too weak to guide her,
 Is like a headstrong horse that throws the rider.'

Young's Love of Fame, Sat. vi. (S. vi. 129):

'Knowledge, of unmade happiness
 The rude material,—Wisdom add to this;
 Wisdom the sole artificer of bliss.'

Par. Lost, vii. 126:

'But Knowledge is as food, and needs no less
 Her temperance over appetite, to know
 In measure what the mind may well contain;
 Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
 Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind.'

With this Mr. Keightley compares Sir W. Davenant's poem on Gondibert (1651), ii. 8. 22:

'For though books are as diet for the mind,
 If Knowledge, early got, self-value breeds,
 By false digestion it is turn'd to wind,
 And what should nourish on the eater feeds.'

l. 101. Cp. Pope's Essay on Criticism, l. 418:

'What woful stuff this madrigal would be,
 In some starved hackney sonnetteer, or me!
 But let a lord once own the happy lines,
 How the wit brightens! how the style refines!'

l. 102. Cp. Table Talk, l. 542; and Pope's Essay on Criticism, l. 305:

'Others for language all their care express,
 And value books, as women men, for dress;
 Their praise is still—The style is excellent!
 The sense, they humbly take upon content.'

l. 126. Joshua x. 12-14.

ll. 127-9. Cp. Psalm civ. 19.

ll. 140-46. Cp. Thomson's Seasons, Winter, 1065:

'Yet bear up a while,
 And what your bounded view, which only saw
 A little part, deem'd evil, is no more;
 The storms of wintry time will quickly pass,
 And one unbounded Spring encircle all.'

Keble's Christian Year, 23rd Sunday after Trinity:

'Soon o'er their heads blithe April airs shall sing,
 A thousand wild-flowers round them shall unfold,
 The green buds glisten in the dews of Spring,
 And all be vernal rapture as of old.'

l. 142. Cp. Virgil, Aen. iii. 23 :
 ' Virgulta, et densis *hastilibus* horrida myrtus.'

l. 152. *the other* ;—' The Guelder Rose.'—C.

l. 165. *Hypericum perforatum* ;—St. John's wort.

l. 167. *Mezerion* ;—spurge laurel.

l. 170. *Althaea* ;—the marsh mallow.

l. 178. Cp. Keble's Christian Year, 6th Sunday after Trinity :
 ' Never so fast, in silent April shower,
 Flush'd into green the dry and leafless bower.'

l. 181. Cp. Pope's Moral Essays, iii. 167 :
 ' Builds life on death, on change duration founds.'

And Rom. and Juliet, ii. 3 :
 ' The Earth, that's Nature's mother, is her tomb ;
 What is her burying-place, that is her womb.'

Lucret. De Rer. Nat. v. 260 :
 ' Omniparens, eadem rerum commune sepulchrum,
 Ergo terra tibi limatur, et aucta recrescit.'

l. 188. Cp. Gray's Elegy in a Country Churchyard, st. 14 :
 ' Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
 And waste its sweetness on the desert air.'

On this the Aldine Ed. of Gray quotes Chamberlayne's Pharonida, Pt. ii. Bk. iv.

p. 94 : ' Like beauteous flowers, which vainly waste their scent
 Of odours in unhaunted deserts.'

And Young, Univ. Passion, Sat. v. p. 128 :
 ' In distant wilds, by human eyes unseen,
 She rears her flowers, and spreads her velvet green.'

Also Pope, Rape of the Lock, iv. 156 :
 ' There kept my charms conceal'd from mortal eye,
 Like roses that in deserts bloom and die.'

l. 225. Cp. Virgil, Georgic iv. 220 :
 ' Esse apibus partem divinae mentis, et haustus
 Aetherios dixere, deum namque ire per omnes
 Terraque, tractusque maris, caelumque profundum.'

And the same, Aen. vi. 724 :
 ' Principio caelum ac terras, camposque liquentes,
 Lucentemque globum lunae, Titaniaque astra
 Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus
 Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.'

l. 233. *Pomona*, the goddess of fruits and fruit trees ; *Pales*, the god of shepherds, and their flocks and cattle ; *Pan*, the personification of deity as displayed in creation, and pervading all Nature ; *Flora*, the goddess of flowers ; *Vertumnus*, the god of the seasons, and of the productions in the vegetable world, (the husband of Pomona).

I. 255. Cp. Par. Lost, iv. 639 :

‘With thee conversing, I forget all time;
All seasons and their change, all please alike.’

I. 287. Langford was a noted auctioneer of the day, whose sales of pictures, books, and articles of vertu, formed a favourite resort for loungers. He was a predecessor of George Robins in the auction-rooms in Covent Garden.

I. 298. Proverbs xiv. 10. Cp. Dr. N. Cotton, The Fireside, st. 2 :

‘No noisy neighbour enters here,
No intermeddling stranger near,
To spoil our heartfelt joys.’

II. 315-20. Cp. Browne, Britannia’s Pastorals, Pt. I. v. 697-716 :

‘Then as a nimble squirrel from the wood,’ &c.

I. 369. Cp. Par. Lost, i. 1 :

‘Man’s first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought Death into the world and all our woe.’

I. 404. *as likes them*. For this archaism cp. Deut. xxiii. 16, ‘it liketh him;’ Esther viii. 8, ‘as it liketh you;’ Amos iv. 5, ‘this liketh you.’ ‘Hym likede’ is found in Robert of Gloucester (H. Coleridge’s Glossarial Index of Thirteenth Century Literature). Mr. Aldis Wright gives to the verb *like*, when thus used, the transitive sense ‘to please.’ (Bible Word Book, 1866, p. 296.) But it seems preferable to regard it as one of our old impersonal verbs;—‘an abundance of which (as Mr. Abbott observes) is a mark of an early stage in a language, denoting that a speaker has not yet arrived so far in development as to trace his own actions and feelings to his own agency.’ (Shakspearian Grammar, 1871, p. 208.) Cp. ‘it repented the Lord,’ Gen. vi. 6; Judges ii. 18; and ‘it repenteth Me,’ Gen. vi. 7; 1 Sam. xv. 11; ‘it would have pitied a man to see,’ 2 Maccabees, iii. 21; ‘it dislikes me,’ Othel. ii. 3; ‘it yearns me not,’ Hamlet, v. 4:—and perhaps the phrases, ‘meseems’ and ‘methinks.’ (Cp.

‘Where it thinks best unto your royal self.’ Rich. III. iii. 1).

I. 444. Exodus xxiii. 5.

I. 446. Deut. xxii. 6.

I. 450. Genesis ix. 2, 3.

I. 461. Psalms cxlvii. 9; and civ. 21.

II. 467-70. Numbers xxii. 22-34.

II. 485, 490. *Misagathus*;—that is, Hate-good (Gr. *μισέω* and *ἀγαθός*). *Evander*; that is, Good-man (Gr. *εὖ* and *ἀγάθος*).

I. 486. *atheist in ostent*;—‘Ostent’ (from Lat. *ostendere*, to shew) means appearance, show, profession; though sometimes also used in Old English as equivalent to the modern ‘ostentation.’ Shakspeare speaks of ‘a sad ostent,’ Mer. of Ven. ii. 2; and of ‘fair ostents of love,’ ibid. ii. 8. Cowper

seems to mean that Misagathus made a hollow, outward profession of Atheism. The Poet has elsewhere expressed his doubts whether 'earth bear so base a slave' as a real Atheist: (Prog. of Error, l. 615).

l. 497. Cp. King Lear, iv. 6 :

‘The murmuring surge,
That on th’ unnumber’d idle pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high.’

l. 514. Cp. Virgil, Aen. iii. 30 :

‘Gelidusque coit formidine sanguis.’

ll. 568–72. See the Colubriad (vol. i. p. 187), and the note thereon. Cp. Akenside’s Inscription for a Grotto, l. 11 :

‘Chase from all my bounds
Each thing impure or noxious. Enter in,
O stranger, undismay’d. Nor bat, nor toad,
Lurks here.’

And Par. Lost, iv. 703 :

‘Other creature here,
Bird, beast, insect, or worm, durst enter none.’

l. 634. The Handel Commemoration was held in Westminster Abbey in June, 1784, being the centenary of that Composer’s birth. There were 525 performers, and nearly £13,000 were received for the five days’ performances, which sum was given to the Fund for decayed Musicians. These lines were added to the poem during revisal. Mr. Newton had preached at St. Mary Woolnoth, Lombard Street, in 1784–5, ‘Fifty Expository Discourses, on the series of Scriptural Passages which form the subjects of the celebrated Oratorio of Handel,’ which he published in 1786, under the title of *Messiah*. Being asked for a motto for this work, Cowper wrote—‘There is something so new and peculiar in the occasion, that I question whether in the classics can be found a sentiment suited to it. Our sins and follies assume a shape that heathen writers had never any opportunity to notice. They deified the dead indeed, but not in the temple of Jupiter. The new-made god had an altar of his own, and they conducted the ceremony without sacrilege or confusion.’—*To Newton*, July 9, 1785. ‘So then, because Handel set anthems to music, you sing them in honour of Handel; and because he composed the music of Italian songs, you sing them in a Church. Truly Handel is much obliged to you, but God is greatly dishonoured.’—*To Unwin*, Nov. 20, 1784.

l. 652. *Buckram* (from Fr. *bougram*) is a kind of strong linen cloth, stiffened with gum or glue, and used by tailors and stay-makers. The word is likewise found used as an *adj.*, as in the case of Falstaff’s ‘two rogues in buckram suits,’ (2 Henry IV, ii. 4); and this sometimes in a metaphorical sense, as in the phrase ‘buckram bishops’ (Fulke’s Answer to Allen, p. 301), i.e. stiff, precise, formal:—cp. ‘starched.’ Much like this is

Cowper's use of the word in a letter to Lady Hesketh, Dec. 15, 1785: 'Homer is, on occasions that call for that style, the easiest and most familiar of all writers: a circumstance that escaped Pope entirely, who takes most religious care that he shall everywhere strut in buckram.' As buckram was often used as a stiff lining, placed beneath a frailer texture to make it stand out firmly, the expression 'to buckram out' a thing came to be applied metaphorically, as in our text.

l. 658. Ely Place, Holborn; so called as having been originally the London residence of the Bishops of Ely. Here John of Gaunt died in 1399. And here two of the Poet's ancestors were kept in confinement as Loyalists, during the Commonwealth: Sir William Cowper the first Baronet of Rattling Court, and his son John, who died a prisoner in Ely Place.

l. 660. William, Duke of Cumberland (and Marquess of Berkhamstead, Cowper's native place), was third son of George II, was born in 1721, and died in 1765. He defeated at Culloden, April 16, 1746, Charles Edward the 'Young Pretender,' grandson of James II. The news of this victory reached London just at the hour of morning service on Sunday; and the loyal chapel-clerk, having his head full of nothing else, gave out the Psalm with the formula 'Let us sing to the praise and glory of King George.' See Introduction, § 3 (vol. i, p. xlxi).

l. 662. *eke*;—also; from Ang. Sax. *eacan*, to add. Cp. John Gilpin, ll. 3, 92.

l. 682. Garrick's Shakspeare Jubilee was held at Stratford-on-Avon in September, 1769.

l. 686. The Mulberry Tree planted by Shakspeare in his garden at New Place, Stratford, (purchased by him from the Underwood family in 1597):—from the wood of which tree snuff-boxes and other relics were freely handed about for sale at this Jubilee.

l. 729. Cp. Romans viii. 22.

ll. 747–818. This 'view of the restoration of all things' was the specimen extract that Cowper sent to Mr. Newton, when he first informed the latter that he was 'again at Johnson's.' (Oct. 30, 1784.) To Unwin alone had he confided the secret of his Poem during its progress. 'As I have admitted into my description no images but what are scriptural, and have aimed as exactly as I could at the plain and simple sublimity of the Scripture language, I have hopes the manner of it may please you. As far as the numbers and diction are concerned, it may serve pretty well for a sample of the whole.'—*To Newton*, Nov. 27, 1784.

l. 754. From Addison's Tragedy of Cato:

'True, she is fair—oh! how divinely fair!'

l. 766. Psalm lxv. 14 (Prayer-book Version).

l. 768. Cp. Genesis iii. 17, 18.

l. 773. *Libbard*;—old poetical form of 'leopard.' Spenser has the word,

Faery Queene, i. 6. 25 ; and Shakspeare, Love's Labour's Lost, v. 2. Ben Jonson, in the Masque of Queens, calls the Aconite *libbard's-bane*.

l. 774. Isaiah lxv. 25.

l. 778. Cp. Isaiah xi. 8.

l. 780. In defence of this use of the word *worm* in its old sense of 'serpent,' Cowper reminds Mr. Newton of Par. Lost (ix. 1068), and of Ant. and Cleop. v. 2 ; and adds, 'A worm is a small serpent, and a serpent is a large worm. And when an epithet significant of the most terrible species of those creatures is adjoined, the idea is surely sufficiently ascertained. No animal of the vermicular or serpentine kind is *crested*, but the most formidable of all.'—*To Newton*, Dec. 11, 1784. Moreover, *worm* is pure Scandinavian for a serpent.

l. 799. *See Salem built* ;—that is, 'The holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven,' Rev. xxi. 2.

l. 805. 'Nebaioth and Kedar, the sons of Ishmael, and progenitors of the Arabs, in the prophetic Scripture here alluded to [Isaiah lx. 3-7] may be reasonably considered as representatives of the Gentiles at large.'—C.

l. 792. Rev. v. 9, 12.

l. 806. Cp. Par. Lost, ii. 1 :

'High on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold.'

But it does not appear why Cowper says 'the *looms* of Ormus.' Ormus, an island in the Persian Gulf, produced nothing but salt; but in 1567 the Portuguese were allowed to make it an *entrepot*—a sort of Oriental Venice—through which diamonds (and doubtless also 'pearl and gold') were passed from India to Persia. These diamonds formed a principal part of the wealth of India (where they were found), and of Ormus, which was the mart for them. Possibly Cowper originally wrote 'the *gems* of Ormus.' Such a reading does not appear in any of the editions; but the substitution of the one word for the other is conceivable, if the copy were written down from the Poet's dictation.

l. 807. *Saba* ;—i.e. Arabia Felix. Cp. Par. Lost, iv. 162 :

'Sabaean odours from the spicy shore
Of Araby the blest.'

l. 810. Cp. Isaiah lx. 18.

l. 817. *Saw never*. Cowper is fond of this cadence, cp. Bk. i. 556 ; vi. 443. He learned it from his master, Milton. Cp. 'which my mind knew never,' Par. Lost, v. 35 ; 'such as heard in heaven till now was never,' ibid. vi. 209.

l. 868. Cp. Rev. vi. 15-17.

l. 871. Cp. 2 Pet. iii. 4.

l. 884. Theophilus Lindsey, A.M., who was appointed to the Vicarage of

Catterick near Richmond, in Yorkshire, 1763, was one of many clergymen of his day who embraced Unitarian opinions. In 1771 he took an active part in an Association for securing the Relief of the Clergy from the necessity of subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles. A petition to this effect was presented to the House of Commons, Feb. 6, 1772, signed by more than 200 of the Clergy; but being opposed by Lord North, Charles Fox, and (strange to say) Edmund Burke, it was rejected on a division by 217 to 71. On Nov. 12, 1773, Mr. Lindsey resigned his living; and thereupon opened a chapel in Essex Street, Strand, in which he used the Church Liturgy, 'reformed' in accordance with the suggestions of Dr. Samuel Clarke. His example was followed by several other beneficed clergymen, on the same grounds; and amongst them, by Dr. John Jebb, F.R.S. (who became a physician); and Dr. John Disney, who in 1782 resigned his Rectory of Panton and Vicarage of Swinderby in Yorkshire, and afterwards became Mr. Lindsey's successor in the Essex Street Chapel. A memoir of Mr. Lindsey, by T. Belsham, was published in London, 1873, as a centenary volume. Cp. *Contemp. Review* for April, 1874, p. 747.

l. 898. Cp. St. Jude, verse 13.

l. 949. Genesis xxiv. 63.

l. 986. Cp. Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, ii. 335:

'Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.'

ll. 1006-16. The Poet here alludes to the fact that *The Task*, which he had commenced in June, 1783, 'in obedience to the fair' Lady Austen, was continued in the graver tone which was more likely to please Mrs. Unwin, after his rupture with Lady Austen in May, 1784. See *Life*, pp. xxix, xxx.

l. 1024. 'What there is of a religious cast in the volume I have thrown towards the end of it, for two reasons; first, that I might not revolt the reader at his entrance,—and secondly, that my best impressions might be made last. Were I to write as many volumes as Lope de Vega, or Voltaire, not one of them would be without this tincture.'—*To Unwin*, Oct. 10, 1784. The judgment of the world has justified the anticipation of the Poet, who wrote thus to Mr. Newton, Dec. 11, 1784:—'Though as little apt to be sanguine as most men, and more prone to fear and despond, than to overrate my own productions, I am persuaded that I shall not forfeit anything by this volume, that I gained by the last.'

TIROCINIUM.

This Poem was commenced in 1782, when it 'grew to the length of 200 lines, and then stopped.'—*To Unwin*, Oct. 20, 1784. The Poet resumed it two years later; and the date of its completion is fixed by the dedication to the Rev. W. C. Unwin, 'The Tutor of his two sons,'

Nov. 6, 1784. It was published with *The Task*, in July, 1785. 'I am mistaken, if *Tirocinium* do not make some of my friends angry, and procure me enemies not a few. There is a sting in verse, that prose neither has, nor can have: and I do not know that schools in the gross, and especially public schools, have ever been so pointedly condemned before. But they are becoming a nuisance, a pest, an abomination; and it is fit that the eyes and noses of mankind should, if possible, be open to perceive it.'—*To Unwin*, May 8, 1784. 'It treats of the scandalous relaxation of discipline that obtains in almost all schools . . . It recommends the office of tutor to the father, where there is no real impediment; the expedient of a domestic tutor where there is; and the disposal of boys into the hands of a respectable country clergyman, who limits his attention to two, in all cases where they cannot be conveniently educated at home.'—*To Newton*, Nov. 27, 1784. The motto was furnished by Mr. Bull, in reply to the following humorous request (Nov. 8, 1784):—'Find me one in any of your multitudinous volumes, no matter whether it be taken from *Burgersdicius*, *Bogtrottius*, or *Puddengulpius*, the more recondite the better; the world will suppose at least that I am familiar with the author whom I quote: and though the supposition will be an erroneous one, it will do them no harm, and me some good.'

l. 33. Cp. *Romans* ii. 15.

l. 120. The *Horn-book* is a thing of the past. It was 'the alphabet-book, which was a thin board of oak, about nine inches long, and five or six wide, on which was printed the alphabet, the nine digits, and sometimes the Lord's Prayer. It had a handle, and was covered in front with a sheet of thin *horn*, to prevent its being soiled. The board and its horn cover were held together by a narrow frame or border of brass.'—*Brewer's Dict. of Phrase and Fable*, p. 417.

l. 135. *Dreamer*;—*John Bunyan*.

l. 163. See *2 Chron. xxvi. 19*.

l. 197. 'The author begs leave to explain:—Sensible that without such knowledge neither the ancient poets and historians can be tasted, or indeed understood, he does not mean to censure the pains that are taken to instruct a schoolboy in the religions of the heathen; but merely that neglect of Christian culture, which leaves him shamefully ignorant of his own.'—C. Cowper tells us that he 'acquired Latin and Greek at the expense of much more important knowledge' (S. i. 8); having left Westminster 'tolerably well furnished with grammatical knowledge, but as ignorant of all kinds of religion as the satchel at his back.' (S. i. 14.)

l. 230. *Hairbreadth scapes*;—*Othello*, i. 3.

l. 266. *Ubiquarian*. I do not know the Poet's authority for this word, which is not in the Dictionaries. The usual form of the adjective is *ubiquitary*; for which 'ubiquitous' is sometimes used colloquially.

l. 267. See 2 Kings v. 26.

l. 361. This classical use of the word 'prolix,' in the sense of 'long and loose' (Lat. *pro laxus*), is rare in English.

l. 421. Cp. l. 826.

l. 435. Dr. Robert Lowth (born 1710, died 1787) was the son of Dr. William Lowth, the Commentator. Having been educated at Winchester and New College, he became successively Bishop of St. David's in 1766; of Oxford in the same year; and of London, 1777-87. He had been appointed as Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1741: and in 1753 he published his Praelections, under the title of *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum*. His other works were, a Life of William of Wykeham, 1758; an Introduction to English Grammar, 1761; and a Translation of the Prophet Isaiah, 1778. Dr. Lewis Bagot, fifth son of Sir Walter Wagstaffe Bagot, fifth Baronet of Blithfield, Staffordshire, and brother of William first Lord Bagot, was born in 1740, and died in 1802. Proceeding from Westminster to Oxford, he became successively Dean of Christ Church; Bishop of Bristol in 1782; of Norwich in 1783; and of St. Asaph, 1790-1802. The Poet gives Unwin his 'reasons for the compliment,' thus:—'I wished the world to know that I have no objection to a bishop, *qua* bishop. In the second place, the brothers were all five my schoolfellows; and very amiable and valuable boys they were. Thirdly, Lewis, the Bishop, had been rudely and coarsely treated in the Monthly Review, on account of a sermon which appeared to me, when I read their extract from it, to deserve the highest commendation, as exhibiting explicit proof both of his good sense and unfeigned piety.'—(Dec. 18, 1784.) The allusion here is to the 'Discourses on the Prophecies concerning the First Establishment and Subsequent History of Christianity,' delivered by Dr. Bagot as Warburtonian Lecturer in 1780. The Rev. Walter Bagot, an elder brother of the Bishop, was one of Cowper's correspondents; and to him the latter wrote (Jan. 15, 1786), 'When I can hear of the rest of the bishops, that they preach and live as your brother does, I will think more respectfully of them than I feel inclined to do at present.' Cp. letter to W. Bagot, Nov. 9, 1785.

ll. 436-53. 'Connexions formed at school are said to be lasting, often beneficial. There are two or three stories of this kind upon record, which would not be so constantly cited as they are, whenever this subject happens to be mentioned, if the chronicle that preserves their remembrance had many besides them to boast of. For my own part I found such friendships, though warm enough in their commencement, surprisingly liable to extinction; and of seven or eight whom I had selected for intimates, out of about three hundred, in ten years' time not one was left me.'—*To Unwin*, Oct. 5, 1780.

l. 500. *Jachin and Boaz*;—the names given to the two pillars of brass, set up in the porch of King Solomon's Temple. See 1 Kings vii. 15-22.

l. 508. Pope's Essay on Man, Epistle iii. 304.

l. 542. *Vestriss* ;—see note in Vol. i., on Conversation, l. 58.

ll. 555—76. ‘At eight or nine years of age the boy goes to school. From that moment he becomes a stranger in his father’s house. Year after year he feels himself more and more detached from his parents, till at last he is so effectually weaned from the connexion, as to find himself happier anywhere than in their company.’—*To Unwin*, Sept. 17, 1780.

EPISTLE TO HILL.

Poems, 1785, i. 285.

Written in the middle of Nov. 1784. ‘I wrote it on Wednesday last; a tribute so due that I must have disgraced myself had I not paid it. He ever serves me in all that he can, though he has not seen me these twenty years.’—*To Unwin*, Nov. 20, 1784. Hill was Cowper’s senior at Westminster. He was an attorney in Great Queen Street, a man of much quiet humour, but of regular habits and close application to business: and through Cowper’s introduction he afterwards became secretary to Lord Chancellor Thurlow. He and the Poet were fellow-members of the Nonsense Club (cp. Life, p. xv., and letter to Hill, June 9, 1785); and Hill was the kind and efficient manager of all Cowper’s pecuniary affairs throughout his life. He survived the Poet, and died at an advanced age.

ODE TO APOLLO.

Poems, 1794, ii. 350.

THE FAITHFUL BIRD.

Poems, 1794, ii. 359. The last verse is given as it stands in ed. 1808.

PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED.

Poems, 1794, ii. 361.

l. 1. *Rousseau* ;—‘It was one of the whimsical speculations of this philosopher, that all fables which ascribe reason and speech to animals should be withheld from children, as being only vehicles of deception. But what child was ever deceived by them, or can be, against the evidence of his sense?’—C. Jean Jacques Rousseau was born at Geneva in 1712, and died in 1778.

THE NEEDLESS ALARM.

Poems, 1794, ii. 365.

ll. 3, 36. *Kilwick and Dinglederry* ;—‘Two woods belonging to John Throckmorton, Esq.’—C.

THE YEARLY DISTRESS.

Poems, 1803, i. 257.

The Rev. W. Cawthorne Unwin, having been educated at the Charterhouse, and at Christ's College, Cambridge, became Rector of Stock-cum-Ramsden-Belhouse, in Essex. While on a tour in the south of England, with Mr. Henry Thornton (a son of the philanthropic John Thornton), he was seized with typhus fever, of which he died at Winchester, Nov. 29, 1786; leaving a widow and three young children. He was buried in Winchester Cathedral.

GRATITUDE.

Hayley, 1803, ii. 266.

Written in 1786, when Lady Hesketh furnished Weston Lodge for Cowper. See Life.

l. 40. *Mulciber* ;—another name for Vulcan, the divine smith ; probably derived from Lat. *mulcere*, 'to soften,' in allusion to the effects of fire in melting metal.

THE POET'S NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

Poems, 1794, ii. 348.

Written for Jan. 1, 1788 : Mrs., afterwards Lady, Throckmorton was Maria, daughter of Thomas Gifford, Esq., of Chillington. 'This morning I sent to the Hall a copy of verses entitled The Wish, or The Poet's New Year's Gift. Their kindness is so great, and they seize with such eagerness every opportunity of doing all they think will please us, that I held myself almost in duty bound to treat them with this stroke of my profession.'—*To Lady Hesketh*, Jan. 1, 1788.

THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT.

This and the two following poems were written in March 1788, to be sung to popular airs as street ballads. They were published in the Poems, 1803, i. pp. 311, 317. These songs, written at the solicitation of General Cowper, were not successful among the class of persons for whom they were intended. They were written under protest ; as the subject 'seemed to offer only images of horror, which could by no means be accommodated to the style of that sort of composition.'—*To Gen. Cowper* (S. iv. 8). 'I have been twice or thrice assailed with entreaties to write a poem [on the Slave-trade]. But I felt myself so much hurt in my spirits the moment I entered on the con-

temptation of it, that I have determined absolutely to have nothing more to do with it. There are some scenes of horror, on which my imagination can dwell, not without some complacency. But then they are such scenes as God, not man, produces. In earthquakes, high winds, tempestuous seas, there is the grand as well as the terrible. But when man is active to disturb, there is such meanness in the design, and such cruelty in the execution, that I both hate and despise the whole operation, and feel it a degradation of poetry to employ her in the description of it.'—*To Bagot, June 17, 1788.*

THE MORNING DREAM.

The Poet tells General Cowper, that this ballad (which was to have been sung to the air of 'Tweedside') is 'that which appeared to himself the best' of the series (S. iv. 8): cp. letter to Lady Hesketh, June 27, 1788. On the subject of the slave-trade, see note on *The Task*, ii. 42.

MRS. MONTAGU'S FEATHER HANGINGS.

These adorned the walls of the room in which Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu (born 1720, died 1800) held her famous 'Blue Stocking Club,' at Montagu House, Portman Square. This Club, to which both ladies and gentlemen were admitted, is said to have been so named because one of its regular members, Mr. Benjamin Stillingfleet, used to appear there in his ordinary blue worsted stockings. Mrs. Montagu is also well known for having instituted an annual dinner on May-day to the chimney-sweeps of London, in consequence of a relative of hers having been discovered as a chimney-sweep, after running away from Westminster School. She was the daughter of Mr. Robinson, of West Layton, Yorkshire, and was married in 1742 to Edward Montagu, of Denton Hall in Northumberland, M.P., who died in 1775. She assisted George Lord Lyttelton in his *Dialogues of the Dead*, 1765; and in 1769 published her 'Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakspeare, with Remarks on the Misrepresentations of Voltaire.' Of this work Cowper wrote,—'I no longer wonder that Mrs. Montagu stands at the head of all that is called learned, and that every critic vails his bonnet to her superior judgment. The learning, the good sense, the sound judgment and wit displayed in it, fully justify not only my compliment, but all compliments that either have been already paid to her talents, or shall be paid hereafter.'—*To Lady Hesketh, May 27, 1788.* The poem was first printed in the Gentleman's Magazine for June 1788, and was included in Poems 1803, i. 263; having been written in May, 1788, at the request of Lady Hesketh. She had sent the Poet a note received from Mrs. Montagu; and he replied, 'In the style of the lady's note to you, I can easily perceive a smatch of her

character. Neither men nor women write with such neatness of expression, who have not given a good deal of attention to language, and qualified themselves by study.' (May 12, 1788.)

THE DOG AND THE WATER-LILY.

Written in June, 1788. First printed in a separate form, with the 'Lines on the Receipt of my Mother's Picture,' in 1798; and included in Poems, 1799, ii. 295. The Poet tells the story in prose to Lady Hesketh, June 27, 1788.

l. 7. *Nymphs*;—'Sir Robert Gunning's daughters.'—C. These ladies, daughters of Sir Robert first Baronet of Horton, Northumberland, were Charlotte, who was married in 1790 to the Hon. Stephen Digby; and Barbara, who became the wife of Major-General Ross, in 1795.

MRS. THROCKMORTON'S BULLFINCH.

Written in Sept. 1788: published in Poems, 1794, ii. 343.

l. 3. *Maria*;—Mrs. Throckmorton. See note on the Poet's New Year's Gift.

ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE.

Written in Feb. 1790. First printed in a separate form, with 'The Dog and the Water-Lily,' in 1798; and included in the Poems of the same year, i. 244.

The Poet's mother was Anne, daughter of Roger Donne of Ludham Hall, Norfolk, Esq., by Katherine, daughter of Mr. Bruin Clench. She was born at Ludham, Oct. 14, 1703, and died at Berkhamstead, Nov. 13, 1737. Mrs. Bodham, who sent the picture, was her niece; being third daughter of the Rev. Roger Donne, Rector of Catfield, Norfolk, by his second wife Harriet-Judith, daughter of the Rev. Peter Rival. She was born in 1748, and was married in 1771 to the Rev. Thomas Bodham, Rector of Mattishall, Norfolk.

The picture, an original in oils by Heines, reached Cowper at Weston, Feb. 25, 1790. On the 27th, he wrote to Mrs. Bodham,—'The world could not have furnished you with a present so acceptable to me . . . I viewed it with a trepidation of nerves and spirits somewhat akin to what I should have felt, had the dear original presented herself to my embraces. I kissed it, and hung it where it is the last object that I see at night, and the first on which I open my eyes in the morning. She died when I completed my sixth year; yet I remember her well, and can bear ocular witness of the fidelity of the copy.' (S. i. 437.)

l. 38. Cp. Task, v. 655, 876. Caesar, Bell. Gall. iii. 18, 'Fere libenter homines quod volunt credunt ;' Bell. Civ. ii. 7, 'Nam quae volumus, et credimus libenter : et quae sentimus ipsi, reliquos sentire speramus.' See 2 Henry IV, iv. 4—

'Thy wish was father, Harry, to that thought.'

Young, *Night Thoughts*, ii. 433—

'So prone our hearts to whisper what we wish ;'
and the same, vii. 1311—

'What ardently we wish, we soon believe.'

l. 53. *Pastoral house* ;—the Rectory of Great Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire, of which parish the Poet's father was 'Pastor.'

l. 97. 'Garth.'—C. The line is not accurately quoted. It stands thus (Dispensary, canto 3)—

'Where billows never break, nor tempests roar.'

l. 108. Dr. John Johnson informs us that Mrs. Cowper's descent was 'through the families of Hippisley of Throughly in Sussex, and Pellet of Bolney in the same county, from the several noble houses of West, Knollys, Carey, Boleyne, Howard, and Mowbray ; and so by four different lines from Henry III, King of England.' The pedigree, as certified by Cowper and others of the family, is registered in the College of Arms.

JUDGMENT OF THE POETS.

Written in May, 1791 : published by Hayley, 1803, i. 405.

l. 1. *Two nymphs* ;—the months of May and June. 'We have blooming scenes under wintry skies, and with icy blasts to fan them.'—*To Mr. Buchanan*, May 11. 'Oh ! what a month of May this has been ! Let never poet, English poet at least, give himself to the praise of May again.'—*To J. Johnson*, May 23, 1791.

YARDLEY OAK.

Written in 1791, but left unfinished amongst the Poet's MSS., from which it was printed by Hayley, 1803, iii. 409. Cowper had left this memorandum on his MS. :—

'Yardley Oak, in Girth, Feet 22, Inches $6\frac{1}{2}$:

The Oak at Yardley Lodge, Feet 28, Inches 5.'

The former (which was sound in 1791) stands about five miles from Weston, in an open space in Yardley Chase, belonging to the Marquess of Northampton. It is in the Park Farm, near the meeting of the three counties, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Northamptonshire. The latter was a pollard, decayed and almost hollow ; and stood just beyond Kilwick and Dinglederry. 'Since your departure I have twice visited the oak, and

with an intention to push my enquiries a mile beyond, where it seems I should have found another oak, much larger and more respectable than the former . . . This latter oak has been known by the name of Judith for many ages, and is said to have been an oak at the time of the Conquest.'—*To Rose*, Sept. 11, 1788. It is thought that the tree was so named after the Conqueror's niece Judith, who received vast lands in the counties of Northampton and Huntingdon in dower, on her marriage with Earl Waltheof. She had eighty-eight manors in Northamptonshire, including a portion of Yardley.

Mr. Loudon has an account of Yardley Oak in his *Arboretum*, 1838, iii. p. 1765. He gives the girth (from measurements made at that date) at one foot above the ground, as 30 feet, 6 inches. The stem then leaned so much to the south, as to admit of a person walking up it with very little aid from the hands; and it had three huge branches, wholly devoid of bark. Mr. J. A. Picton writes, in *Notes and Queries* for Dec. 13, 1873: 'The Yardley Oak has now few branches, scantily spreading from a huge hollow trunk; and it is unfortunately dying, having been much injured in past years by the deeply-graven names of persons desirous to inform us of their visit' (Fourth Ser., xii. 481).

1. 41. *Dodona* was a city of Epirus, at the foot of Mount Tomaos; where was the most ancient oracle in Greece, in connexion with a temple dedicated to Zeus. This oracle, said to have existed in the days of Deucalion, and certainly anterior to the Trojan War, was believed to utter its responses through the sacred oak.

1. 99. 'Knee-timber is found in the crooked arms of oak; which, by reason of their distortion, are easily adjusted to the angle formed where the deck and the ship's sides meet.'—C. Bacon says, in his 13th Essay: 'Such dispositions [*Misanthropi*] are the very errors of Human Nature: and yet they are the fittest timber to make great Politiques of:—like to *knee timber*, that is good for ships, that are ordained to be tossed; but not for building houses, that shall stand firm.'

THE RETIRED CAT.

Hayley, 1803, i. 253. Written in 1791.

The Poet had written to Lady Hesketh, Nov. 10, 1787, 'I have a kitten, my dear, the drollest of all creatures that ever wore a cat's skin. Her gambols are not to be described, and would be incredible, if they could. In point of size she is likely to be a kitten always, being exceeding small of her age; but time, I suppose, that spoils everything, will make her also a cat. You will see her, I hope, before that melancholy period shall arrive; for no wisdom that she may gain by experience and reflection hereafter will compensate the loss of her present hilarity. She is dressed in a tortoise-shell suit.'

EPITAPH ON A REDBREAST.

Written in March 1792; published by Dr. J. Johnson, 1815, iii. 287.

‘Miss Sally Hurdis’ was sister of the Rev. James Hurdis, Professor of Poetry at Oxford, who was one of Cowper’s correspondents, 1791-3; and whom he met while on a visit to Hayley at Earham in 1792.

TO MRS. UNWIN.

Written in May 1793; published by Hayley, 1803, ii. 43.

This is the best specimen of Cowper’s sonnets.

A TALE.

Hayley, 1803, ii. 299. Written in June, 1793.

Founded on the following extract from the Buckinghamshire Herald for June 1, 1793:—‘Glasgow, May 23. In a block or pulley near the head of the mast of a gabetot, now lying at Broomielaw, there is a chaffinch’s nest and four eggs. The nest was built while the vessel lay at Greenock and was followed thither by both birds. Though the block was occasionally lowered for the inspection of the curious, the birds have not forsaken the nest. The cock, however, visits the nest but seldom; while the hen never leaves it but when she descends to the hull for food.’

TO MARY.

Hayley, 1803, ii. 194. Written in the autumn of 1793.

This was Cowper’s last original poem at Weston. Mary Unwin, daughter of Mr. Cawthorne of Ely, and widow of the Rev. Morley Unwin of Huntingdon, died at East Dereham in Norfolk, Dec. 17, 1796, at the age of 72; and was buried in the North Aisle of Dereham Church. She was, at the time when this Poem was written, in that state of second childishness of mind, and utter helplessness of body, in which she continued from her second attack of paralysis, in Sept. 1792, till the time of her death.

l. 1. This reference to the year 1773 seems to confirm Mr. Newton’s statement, that the poet’s projected marriage with Mrs. Unwin was prevented by the derangement which he suffered in that year. See Life, p. xxiv.

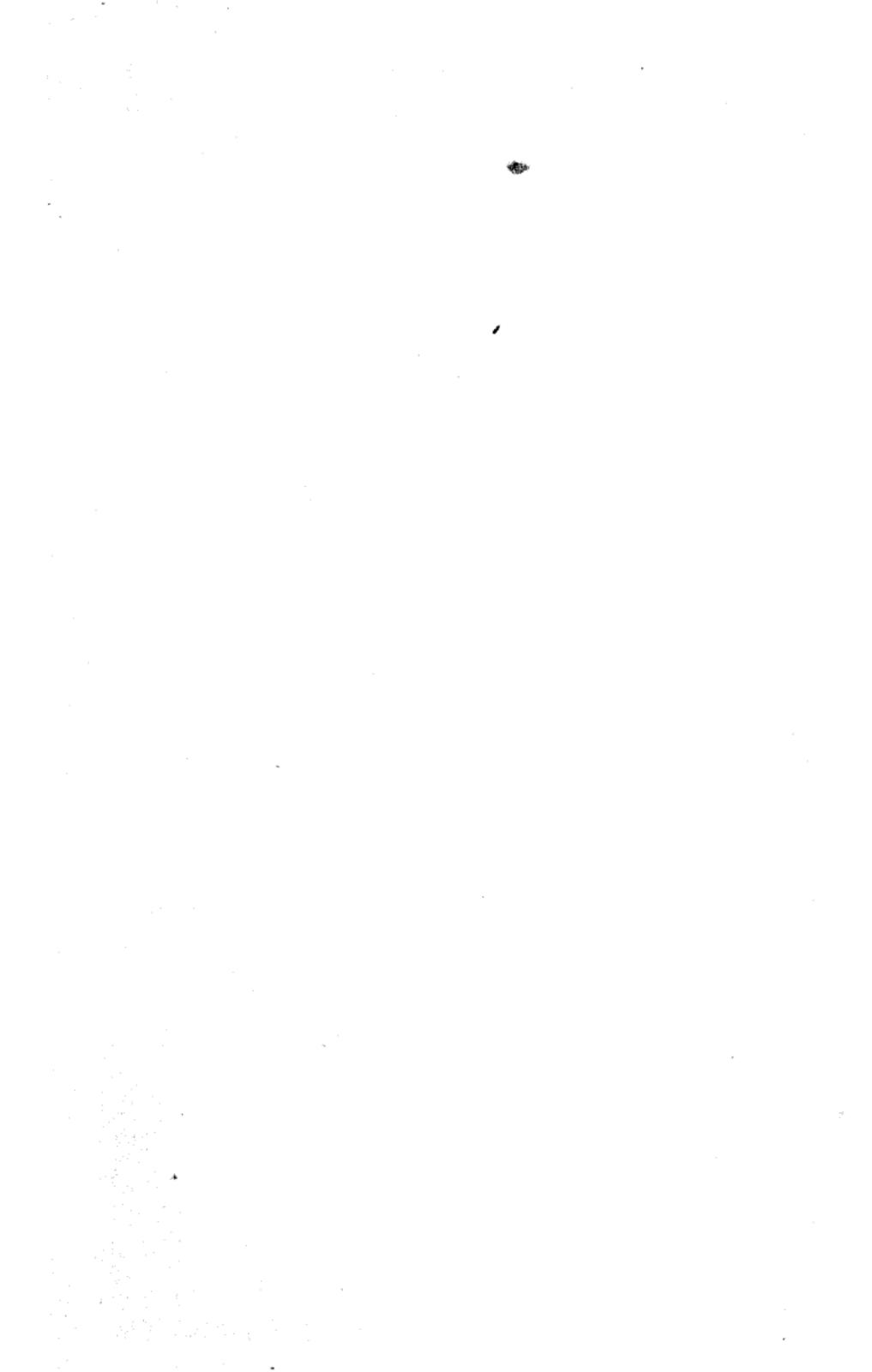
l. 10. When Lady Hesketh visited Olney in June, 1786, she wrote thus to her sister, Theodora Jane Cowper, respecting Mrs. Unwin (then in her sixty-second year)—‘Her constant employment is knitting stockings, which she does with the finest needles I ever saw, and very nice they are—the stockings,

I mean. Our cousin has not for many years worn any other than those of her manufacture. She knits silk, cotton, and worsted. She sits knitting on one side of the table, in her spectacles; and he on the other, reading to her (when he is not employed in writing) in his.'

THE CASTAWAY.

Hayley, 1803, ii. 214. Written March 20, 1799.

This poem was founded on an incident recounted in Anson's Voyages. 'It is (says Southey) the last original piece that Cowper composed; and, all circumstances considered, one of the most affecting that ever was composed.' (S. ii. 149.)



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